THE BIG WAR SERIES

SMASHING *the* HINDENBURG LINE

ROSS KAY

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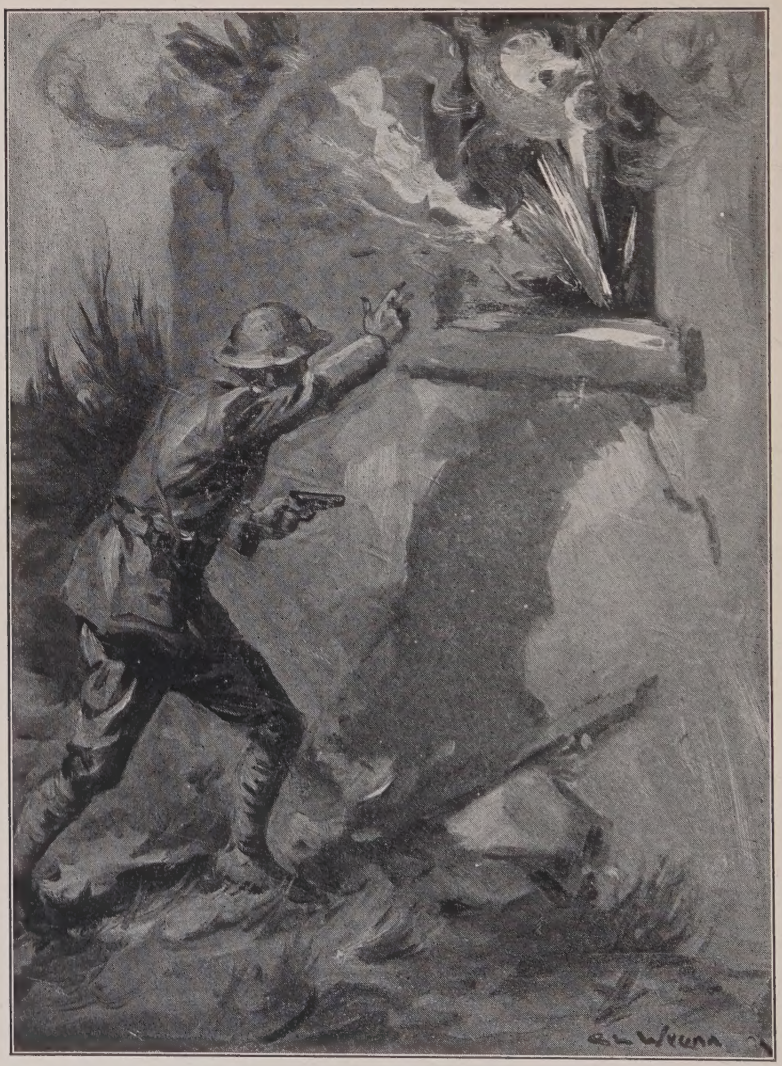

"He leaped forward to the window and with one wild whoop flung the grenade." *Frontispiece.*

THE BIG WAR SERIES

Smashing the Hindenburg Line

The Adventures of Two American Boys in the Last Drive

BY

ROSS KAY

Author of "With Joffre on the Battle Line," "The Air Scout," "The Search for the Spy," "Dodging the North Sea Mines," "Battling on the Somme," "With Pershing at the Front," etc.

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THE BIG WAR SERIES

By Ross Kay

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THE SEARCH FOR THE SPY
THE AIR SCOUT
DODGING THE NORTH SEA MINES
WITH JOFFRE ON THE BATTLE LINE
FIGHTING IN FRANCE
BATTLING ON THE SOMME

(*Other volumes in preparation*)

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Smashing the Hindenburg Line

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PREFACE

MOST of the incidents used in this story were reported directly from the battle-fields. In that sense the story is true. The author has tried to avoid exaggeration and sensationalism. The heroes of the tale are not unnaturally heroic, nor are they unduly precocious. They did only what hundreds of other young American officers did. The record is a source of pride to the nation.

The interest in the Big War is increasing as the world comes to see its magnitude. Surely the most colossal struggle in the history of mankind is a setting for stories to arouse and increase the love of country and the appreciation of the heroism of the brave boys who gave themselves to the defense of liberty and civilization.

The writer desires to thank his young readers who have in so many ways expressed their interest in the Big War Series.

Ross Kay.

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Smashing The Hindenburg Line

CHAPTER I

THE INDIAN SCOUT

"I HAVE just written mother."

"Where is the letter? Let me see it. I'll put a postscript on it and that will save me writing another letter. She'll hear from us both at the same time and it will be enough for her to know that we are still in the land of the living in such a time as this."

"I'll give you the letter. I wrote it when my right foot was standing on the step in the front line trench over yonder. It is the only chance I've had for the past two weeks."

"You're lucky to get that. Did you tell her where we are?"

"I did not. There were two reasons why I didn't tell her."

"I can guess one of them."

"You might guess two. I told her I couldn't tell her just where we are now because it wouldn't pass the censor and besides that I couldn't tell her because I didn't know myself. I told her I was right here."

"Yes, but where is 'here'?"

"Somewhere in France. That's about all I can say."

"And that's enough."

Conversation abruptly ceased between the two young lieutenants.

They were twin brothers, Earl and Leon Platt. When the Big War broke over Europe the two American boys had been spending their summer vacation abroad. Earl was in England when war was declared, and certain of his experiences with a German spy have already been related.[1]

Leon had been in France at the time, visiting places from which his ancestors had come to America when they had left to find homes in the new world.

[1] The Search for the Spy. Dodging North Sea Mines.

For a time Leon had been the companion of a young Frenchman in whose home he had been an unbidden but very welcome guest. [2]

The friendship between Jacques, the young French aviator, and Leon had become stronger with the passing days. Their experiences in the flights which Jacques made and the part which had been assigned Leon after he had enlisted had done much toward increasing their confidence and strengthening the affection each cherished for the other.

As the war progressed and the increased need for men on the line had become apparent both boys had been assigned to the French Infantry. Already they had had numerous adventures and exciting experiences in the trenches. Companions had fallen by their side and young soldiers whom they had loved had dropped completely out of their lives. It was a frequent topic of conversation between Jacques and Leon that they, by some strange course of events, had thus far come safely through the fighting. Both had been wounded, but in the strength of their young, vigorous bodies they had speedily re-

[2] The Air Scout.

covered and retaken their places in the ranks.

Neither Earl nor Leon now looked very much like the boys who had so eagerly sailed from America to visit the homes of their ancestors. At that time they were young and fresh in their interest and eager to see the cities of which their mother often had told them. Now, however, after nearly four years of the most terrific warfare the world had ever known, they were both greatly changed. There was the same sturdy strength of body, but there was also something that appeared in the expression of their faces which indicated that the war had taught them lessons their teachers never could give. There was a seriousness in their manner which was manifest whenever the boys became quiet. It is true they were still full of fun and both enjoyed playing pranks upon their comrades, but the stress and strain of the conflict left less and less time for such diversions. Repeatedly they had been sent out into No Man's Land and several times had taken part in desperate charges which had been made by their division.

That the boys had acquitted themselves well became evident from the fact that both now were

lieutenants. Earl's promotion had been more rapid than Leon's, due in part to the fact that he was earlier in the service in the field. Leon for a considerable time had been little more than a helper to Jacques, but when the latter was transferred to the Infantry, Leon, as has been said, accompanied him. First he had been made a corporal, then a sergeant, and a few months before this story opens he had been greatly elated by the special recognition which had come to him with his commission as second lieutenant.

It is true that the brothers now were among the American troops, and perhaps the fact that they were among their own strengthened their determination and made it more easy for them to receive recognition.

At all events the brothers were lieutenants in companies that now were near each other on the line, and as the French Brigade in which Jacques was serving was also nearby it was possible for the friends to meet occasionally and relate their thrilling experiences.

"Here comes Jacques," spoke up Leon, who was always eager to greet his friend.

The face of the young French lieutenant beamed

as he approached the ruins of the little house where the brothers were seated on the ground. Nor was this the only ruined house. The little hamlet of which it was a part presented a ghastly and almost ghostly appearance. Broken walls, fallen timbers, trees that had been girdled—it was ruin in every direction in which the boys looked. The German army had left its mark of devastation on every spot. Instead, however, of accomplishing the purpose of striking terror into the hearts of their enemies, it had produced the opposite effect.

The anger of the French and American soldiers over the brutalities and coarseness of the Boches had given place to a deepseated feeling of rage. It had not expressed itself often in words, but was manifest whenever they were led into battle. And the feeling seemed to be almost as keen among the Americans as it was among the French who had suffered so much.

Conversation ceased as both boys watched the approach of their friend.

"Who is that with him?" inquired Earl after a brief silence.

"Jesse Tiger."

"Who is he?"

"A full blooded Indian. He's an Apache, I think."

"What is he doing here?" inquired Earl, looking more keenly at the approaching soldier, for Jesse Tiger was clad in uniform. A finer specimen of physical young manhood it would be difficult to find. Tall, well-formed, there was the evidence of great physical strength in his easy walk and in the very manner of his approach.

"There are quite a good many of them over here," explained Leon in a low voice, "and they are great. I wish there were more of them. Do you know that there are several of the old scouts that were in the campaign against Geronimo where Black Jack got his first taste of fighting? They say one of them is eighty years old, but there isn't a man in the army who can crawl out across No Man's Land in the night and find out what is going on among the Boches as he can. And Jesse Tiger has done his part too."

"Is that his real name?"

"Yes," replied Leon. "It's the translation of his name. You know an Indian boy doesn't get any name until he's shown what his name really

ought to be. At least that's what Jesse Tiger tells me. He says an Indian boy is known simply as the 'son of his father' until he is old enough to show what he himself can do."

"And is that the reason why he's called Tiger?"

"Yes, that's his name in his own language. And when he went to school, for he's a college man, he simply took the translation of his Indian name for the one to be put in the catalog."

By this time Jacques, who was also now a lieutenant, and his companion drew near the place where the brothers were seated.

"It does me good to look at you, Jacques!" exclaimed Leon as he leaped to his feet to greet his friend.

"That's kind of you," replied Jacques in his quiet manner, which seldom varied, however exciting his surroundings might be. "I have been listening," he added, "to what your friend the Indian has been telling me."

"What was it you did, Jesse?" demanded Leon as he greeted the young Indian and introduced him to his brother.

"Not very much," replied the young Indian.

"It is not so," said Jacques. "It was a very

brave deed which he and his—what you call them? —comrades did."

"You tell," said Jesse turning to Jacques, as he spoke.

"Why, the boys are all talking about it," began Jacques. "It seems that night before last Mr. Jesse Tiger and five more of his tribe crawled out into the danger zone and went three miles behind the line of the Boches before they stopped. There they found a small château in which were some officers of the Huns having a feast. They were high officers and they were having a high time. Then Jesse Tiger completely spoiled the banquet of the high Boche officers."

"I should think they might have interfered a little with the festivities," suggested Earl with a smile. "Did they all get back safely?"

"They all came back," said Jacques, "and they kept up their adventure even after they have come back. They came into the line wearing a broad grin."

"That's not a garb which is especially protective," suggested Earl.

Ignoring the interruption Jacques continued, "One of the Indians who couldn't speak very

much English told what they had done. He was a corporal, it seems, and he wanted everybody to hear about it. He said 'Heap big feast. We throw bombs. We happy and they very sad.' "

"Good for you, Jesse!" exclaimed Earl. "I think you are the best yet, though the Australians have been giving us lessons on how to get the snipers and I want to tell you they are not very slow either. We are going to take a party over ourselves very soon."

The suggestion of the young lieutenant was to be carried out sooner than he suspected. At that very moment Captain Bolney approached the group and beckoned Earl to one side of the place where the young soldiers were seated.

It was equally evident that he was giving Earl information that was of great interest to the young officer, and when in a brief time he returned to rejoin his companions he found everyone of them watching him eagerly and waiting for him to explain the message he had received.

CHAPTER II

INTO THE NIGHT

NO one spoke as the young officer approached but the expression on every face indicated the question which confronted them all.

"It's all right," said Lieutenant Earl quietly. "I've got a job for some of you to-night."

"What is it?" inquired Leon.

"Captain Bolney has located another sentry post of the enemy and he says that the sooner the Boches in it are killed off the sooner we'll be able to go home."

"And he's dead right," spoke up Jesse Tiger solemnly.

"That's one reason," laughed Earl, "why the captain wants us to go out there; but he's got another one."

"What is that?"

"Why, since we began the fight among the

Marne hills he has had personal interviews with about 300 of the Boche prisoners. You know he is in the intelligence department and I don't think there's a better man in the army for his job."

"That's a good many men to talk with," suggested Leon thoughtfully.

"Yes, sir, that's more prisoners of the enemy that any American officer has ever examined at one time since peace was declared in the Civil War. He stayed right on the job without resting for three days and two nights. He has a little map, his intelligence map, he calls it, which is spotted and dotted with interrogation marks. At least, it was when he began his work. As he goes on he changes the interrogation marks to little disks with names and numbers on them. You see when he first started he didn't know the identity of the German division that was right in front of us and yet to-day he has most of them located."

"But the German divisions have been stepping lively lately," suggested Leon.

"So they have," acknowledged Earl, "and that's the reason why he wants to get some more information."

"She was holding both dogs by a strong leash."
(*Page* 22.)

"Why doesn't he try the British plan?" suggested Jacques.

"What is that? What do you mean?" inquired Earl.

"Why the British when they have a job of this kind to do usually drop a box barrage over a small part of the line and with that go over and take some prisoners or else they search the dead bodies that are lying around on the ground."

"That may have been all right a few weeks ago, but the truth of the matter is that the Boche is a repulsively intelligent kind of an animal along with all his deviltry. He has found out that when a box barrage drops that it is best for him to move on. And he does. It isn't often that he stands on the order of his departure."

"That's right," said Jesse Tiger with a smile, "he surely does skedaddle for cover."

"We have an easier plan than that," said Earl. "We just locate the sentry post and then we 'Indian' straight for it."

"Speaking of Indians," suggested Leon, "I wonder if Jesse Tiger wouldn't like to go out with us."

"I'll go," said Jesse Tiger solemnly. "I

should like much to get a mess of Boche."

"You'll be likely to have your chance to-night," said Earl meaningly. "I don't think I want to take more than seven, perhaps six will be enough."

"When do we start?" inquired Leon.

"You do not start at all."

"How's that?"

"I'm going to take a corporal and four men. That will be enough for this expedition to-night. I'm going to take Jesse Tiger and if I can find him free I am going to take Sammy Noel and Billy Kiehl. That will make four of us, and I'll get two more, and that will be enough."

"What time are you going to start?" inquired Jesse Tiger.

"About half past ten to-night."

"And do you leave from here?" inquired the Indian.

"Yes, this will be as good a place as any. Meet me here at 10:30 sharp."

Whether or not it was the prospect of the dangerous expedition which was to be undertaken or because their duties claimed their attention the little party speedily broke up. "Chow" was

about to be served and every one of the young soldiers was ready for the evening meal.

The duties of the twin lieutenants made it impossible for them to see each other before the time set for Earl's departure. It had been long since Leon, however, had worried about these expeditions. He was well aware of the peril incurred in every attempt, but whether, as he sometimes declared to be the case, he was numb inside or because his brother had been successful in the other similar attempts he had made, the result was the same. Leon no longer wasted his strength in useless anxiety over the fate of his brother.

Perhaps this is a part of the training of a soldier. A prominent general remarked of Pershing when the latter was a young lieutenant in the Spanish War that he was the bravest and coolest man under fire he had ever seen. It was not, however, indifference to danger. It is that conviction, as many of the soldiers express it, that there is a bullet marked for every man and once if it comes there is no escape for the victim. They are not fatalists and yet they accept fate as fixed.

Earl, however, had his own duties and special preparations to make for the perilous venture.

Promptly at half past ten the men whom he had summoned were at the meeting-place and in a brief time all six departed toward the line of the enemy.

Pausing in the dim light near their own outposts, by whom they were halted and quickly released after the single spoken word had been whispered, the lieutenant cautiously led his men toward the sentry post he was seeking. They had not gone far, however, before all six were on their hands and knees. Slowly and steadily they crept across the plowed land. Torn as it had been by the shells of battle there were yet many spots which indicated that once it had been the property of a prosperous farmer. The marks of the plow were still in evidence, not even the cannon having been able to obliterate them entirely. Beside the young lieutenant was Jesse Tiger, distant only two yards. Behind them were the four soldiers, creeping in unison with the men before them.

Not many yards had been covered before Earl was aware that he was drawing near to the place of peril. It was dark all about them, not a star appearing in the sky. Every movement had to be considered carefully before it was made. Some-

times the young Americans felt cautiously in front of their faces and then moved forward not more than an inch at a time. They now drew a little more closely together and kept in touch with one another by feeling instead of by voice.

Between their slow forward movements they lifted their heads somewhat stiffly and listened intently. This attitude in itself is difficult to maintain, but when one is trying to "Indian" his enemy the American boys have found that it is the best of all plans to follow.

Abruptly Earl grasped the arm of the young Indian. Jesse Tiger quickly returned the pressure, indicating that he too had heard the "enemy voices" not far in advance of them.

Turning to the men that were following him Lieutenant Earl whispered: "The corporal and four men will stay here. Don't move unless you are ordered to, no matter what happens. Stay right here," Earl added, not explaining that he and Jesse Tiger were to crawl forward before the men who were with him were well aware of the attempt which was to be made.

With snakelike movements Jesse Tiger and the young lieutenant went forward. Even in the

darkest night in such a position it is possible at times to see figures outlined against the blackness of the sky.

They had not advanced far before they saw "an enemy cross the road," the expression the American soldiers use in describing the sight of a German in the night. In a brief time Jesse Tiger indicated that he had heard the sound of voices not far away.

The two soldiers crawled slowly, exerting their utmost care as they moved nearer the place where the voices had been heard.

Both were motionless when in some unexplained way a small stick broke beneath the weight of Earl. In his nervous condition to his overstrained ears it sounded like the loud report of a rifle.

"Halte! Halte da!" someone shouted in the darkness.

There was no question as to the side to which the unknown voice belonged.

Earl was not familiar with the German language, but like most of the young American officers he had been taught a few simple German expressions. One of these was the word for sur-

render and instantly he called to the unknown soldier.

Again the German sentry called "Halte da!"

The excitement increased when the sound of another soldier, evidently a German was heard as he came plunging toward his comrade. As he approached he fired.

Instantly the two Americans lying on the ground opened fire with their automatic pistols. This weapon is very effective in certain phases of action and never was it more so than at this time.

Behind the lieutenant and the young Indian the corporal and his men were lying on the ground where they had been ordered to stay. They now saw the darkness of the night lighted by flashes of the guns. And the corporal, eager to go to the assistance of his lieutenant, instantly concluded when he saw Earl and the Indian on the ground that they had fallen.

Corporal Kiehl, however, was mistaken. Both Germans indeed succeeded in firing, but both men fell to the ground. The young Indian simply whispered when he saw what had occurred, "We are quicker on the trigger."

Instantly Lieutenant Earl spoke low and the

corporal and his men speedily joined him. At the direction of the young lieutenant they carried the body of one of the dead Germans to a safe distance in the rear and then removed the contents of his pockets and cut off his shoulder straps and other objects by which identification might be made certain.

Quickly, however, when his task had been accomplished, Lieutenant Earl and Jesse Tiger snuggled close to the dead German, whose pocket they had been rifling. The Boches now were using their machine guns, and firing in the direction from which the sounds of the recent contest had been heard.

After two hours had passed the firing from the machine guns ceased. None of the Germans had advanced toward the place where the Americans were lying. Their suspicions evidently had been of an attack in force and they had been playing the machine guns in order to head off any approach. As this attack had not materialized they at last abandoned their fire and the night was once more still.

Then, at the order of Lieutenant Earl, the party turned and retraced their way, leaving the body of

the dead German behind them. Fortunately they were not fired upon again and returned successfully to their own lines.

The following morning, in relating his adventure, Earl said to his brother: "The man who called upon us to halt we found was Johann Tratz."

"Did you find anything of any value in his pockets?"

"You'll have to ask the captain about that," replied Earl quietly. "All I can tell you is that the reason why we succeeded was because the corporal and the men did just what we told them. That sentry post was not used last night anyway and if it is occupied to-night we'll have to go out and empty it. There'll be plenty of calls for work of that kind." And Earl spoke more truly than he knew.

CHAPTER III

UNDER THE BRIDGE

AT that moment Jacques approached the place where the brothers were standing. The light was nearly gone, but they were both able to recognize the young Frenchman of whom both were fond, Leon particularly.

"I've come to find you, Leon," said Jacques simply.

"You won't have to look any further then," replied Leon.

"It's some volunteer work I have."

"That's just what Earl has been doing."

"Yes, but this is different. You know I have not been flying—"

"Are you going up in a 'plane?"

"Yes, and you shall go with me."

"Are you sure, Jacques, that you're in trim?" inquired Earl anxiously. "You know it has been some time since you were flying."

"I have not forgotten," said Jacques modestly. "I shall be able to go in this 'plane. It's not to fight that we shall go, but to find out some things."

"Tell us about it," said Leon quietly.

"It is this way," explained Jacques. "There's a bridge over a little stream ten miles north and three miles east. It is that bridge which the captain says must be destroyed."

"Are we going to drop a bomb on it?" inquired Leon.

"No," answered Jacques. "I shall land and you will take the bomb and place it under the bridge just where you wish. Then the bridge will be blown into pieces and I shall come back to get you."

"Can you find your way in the night?"

"Yes, I can find my way," answered Jacques simply. "I shall fly high and then I shall come down right near the bridge. The Boches do not think anyone is to be there, so far behind their lines."

"Why does the captain want you to destroy the bridge?" inquired Earl.

"He did not explain to me," said Jacques, "but I fancy he has a map of all this country and he is

sending different ones to destroy the different bridges so that the Germans shall not be able to run very fast."

"Then you think this job of ours is just one of a good many that are being done to-night?"

"That's what I think," acknowledged Jacques. "We shall be quick in our work and I do not think we shall have anyone to fight."

"Did you say you were going to leave in your 'plane and then come back while I am fixing the bridge?"

"That's it. That's it exactly."

"Why wouldn't it be better for you to leave your 'plane where you land and then for both of you to creep up to the bridge and keep together when you go back to the place where you leave the 'plane? Then there will be no chance of one of you losing the other," said Earl.

"That's a good plan," acknowledged Jacques, "but I must do what the captain orders and I'm telling you just what his words were. So if you're willing we'll try to destroy that bridge."

"Of course I'm going," said Leon quietly. The years of experience through which the boy

had passed had made him a man in his judgment. Much of the enthusiasm and perhaps recklessness which formerly he had shown had now disappeared. Seriously and earnestly he faced the tasks before him, but the glamour of adventure was all gone. His task now was merely to accomplish certain things that would help to decide the great struggle.

"When do we start?" he inquired quietly.

"In one hour," replied Jacques, "then it will be dark enough for us not to be seen and yet it will be light enough for us to find our way. You must put on your warmest coat—no," he added quickly, "I shall bring you one."

"And where shall we get the bomb?"

"That's already in the 'plane."

"Are we to start from the regular place?"

"Yes, but I shall not follow the regular way. I shall go up, as I told you, very high. Then I shall come down behind the German lines and we shall blow up that bridge."

An hour later both young soldiers were ready for their adventure. Night had fallen, but the condition which Jacques described apparently was fulfilled. It was dark enough to enable the fliers

to be unseen and yet sufficiently light to enable them to determine their course.

When Leon stepped into his place in the 'plane he glanced toward the sky as if he were seeking a path which they might follow. The stars were shining in the heavens. The dull roar of the great guns in the distance was distinctly heard and yet there was no active fighting at this time. It almost seemed as if both great armies had paused for a moment to regain their breath before each violently threw itself against its enemy.

If Jacques shared in the thoughts which were passing through Leon's mind he did not refer to them. Everything was in readiness for their departure and in a brief time they were moving swiftly, and steadily mounting as the dim outlines of the ground disappeared beneath them.

Were they in special danger? The question rapidly came to Leon and he was aware that his only answer must be "yes." But the peril was not as great as when they were setting forth for combat in one of the fighting squadrons. The chief danger now would be that their plans might go awry. Of course there was the chance that some gunner might detect their presence by the

"Leon, motioning his prisoner forward, remarked, 'You're the infantry on this march and I'm the cavalry.'" (*Page* 36.)

sounds of their motor which they could not entirely muffle.

For a time Jacques followed the line held by the Allies, but when a few miles had been covered he abruptly turned eastward.

Leon was unable to distinguish anything more than the bare outlines of the country over which they were passing. And they were steadily mounting all the time.

They had not gone far, however, before he was aware that Jacques was now descending. In great circles the 'plane drew nearer the ground. Very few lights were visible beneath them and at last when Jacques made a safe landing in an apparently deserted field, as yet Leon had not heard any sound to alarm him.

The landing was perfect, and in a moment both boys stepped out of the 'plane and after they had glanced cautiously about them and were convinced that no enemies were near, they conversed in low whispers. "You're to go at once to the bridge," suggested Jacques.

"But where is it?" whispered Leon.

"You walk one hundred yards in that direction," explained Jacques pointing behind him as

he spoke, "and you'll see the little stream. I think you turn to your left and after a short walk you'll find the bridge. But you must look all about you, for I can't tell you more. I have followed the directions given me and I'm sure if they are correct that I have come to the place we want, but I can't tell you exactly."

"And you're going to take the air again?" inquired Leon. "Why don't you leave the 'plane and come with me?"

"Because someone may find the 'plane and then we shall be caught, both of us, behind the German lines. No, it is better for me to fly and leave you to blow up the bridge. I shall come back to this same place or I shall be near it. Those three trees," he added as he pointed to three tall poplars that could be seen in the dim light, "shall be the mark. You may be gone an hour. I shall come back within that time. If I am not here, however, you are to wait one more hour. And then if I do not come you are to try to do your best to get back to our lines."

"And a smart chance I'll have of getting there too," whispered Leon.

The young lieutenant was not unduly alarmed

by the task he had to undertake, but he was well aware of the many slips that might come before his adventure was ended.

Jacques said no more and waiting only until his friend had started in the direction he indicated, he again took his seat in the 'plane. The little craft was equipped with a powerful engine which had been muffled as much as possible and was capable of great speed. It had not been built for fighting, however, and contained few means by which the boys might defend themselves.

In a brief time the noise of the motor no longer was heard by Leon and he was aware that his friend had departed.

For a moment a feeling of intense lonesomeness swept over the heart of the crouching young officer. He was slowly advancing in the direction Jacques had indicated, but after the departure of his friend the full sense of his peril swept over him. There he was, several miles behind the German lines. He had begun an action which was certain to be perilous. Without doubt German soldiers were guarding the bridge across the little stream, although the bridge itself was a modest little structure.

A new feeling of confidence had recently manifested itself among the fighting troops of the Allies. For weeks they had been steadily driven back by the onrushing German hordes. Grimly they had met the attack and though they had moved back miles behind the lines which the Allies originally held there was somehow a feeling prevalent among all the troops that they would not give up. They would fight to the last, even if it meant the death of every man.

However, the present was no time for reverie, and the young lieutenant was ready in every sense. Several times he found bushes which served as a cover and crouching behind them he listened for the sounds he dreaded and yet almost expected to hear.

There was no time for delay, however, and just as soon as Leon was convinced that he was in no immediate peril, he ran swiftly forward toward the next cover he discovered.

In a brief time he saw before him the little winding stream which flowed through the narrow valley. Jacques had been well informed, and Leon's hopes arose, now that he had verified the words of his friend.

Turning to the left as he had been directed, when he drew near the stream, Leon cautiously made his way forward. Apparently the Germans had stationed no special guards near the spot.

There was the bridge directly before him! It was a massive structure for the crossing of so small a stream, but when Leon gained the road he discovered the importance of the bridge. Doubtless much heavy traffic passed over it and many troops marched to and fro across the solid masonwork on their way to battle.

Leon decided, however, that he would act immediately. Carefully he made his way to the ground beneath the end of the bridge nearer him. He carefully examined the foundations and soon discovered the place where in his judgment his bomb would be most effective.

This bomb was in the form of a cylinder and Leon had guarded it carefully as he had moved forward over the ground, which evidently belonged to a little farm.

He cautiously placed the explosive and then glanced anxiously about him. Once more convinced that no enemies were near, he lighted the fuse.

CHAPTER IV

SEEKING A REFUGE

INSTANTLY Leon turned and ran swiftly from the spot. Convinced that enemies were before him he was equally fearful of the explosion which was to come from the bridge. All ideas of time were lost and the young soldier ran at his utmost speed. He was running almost blindly, scarcely aware of the direction in which he was proceeding.

However, in a brief time he again crossed the road and as he gained the opposite bank he halted for a moment expecting to hear the loud blast of the explosion. The light was dim and yet he was able to see somewhat indistinctly all about him. He hesitated a moment as he tried to convince himself of the direction of the place in which he was to meet his recent companion.

The young American was calmer now and confident that he could find his way toward the ap-

pointed place. He looked again in the direction of the bridge but the silence of the night was unbroken. There was no moon and the twinkling stars provided the sole light. It was almost impossible to realize that he was in a land torn and rent by the terrific struggle which now was going on.

Far to the right the darkness was illuminated by several explosions of bombs. He heard also the roar of the artillery in the distance and the response from the opposite side. Night after night and day after day the roar of battle had sounded in his ears. He no longer was compelled to use cotton to shut out the deafening sounds. There had been times when in the very midst of the terrific uproar he had flung himself on the ground and even slept soundly through it all.

Leon suddenly turned and, looking northward, listened intently. He thought he had heard the sound of voices. In a brief time, however, convinced that he had been mistaken, he resumed his flight. Across the fields, through a line of poplar trees, then down the side of a hill, he fled and as he ran his fears increased. It was strange, he thought, that the bomb he had planted under the

bridge had not yet exploded. If he had been compelled to tell how long a time had elapsed since he had fled from the little structure he would have been unable to answer correctly. Indeed, all ideas of time had vanished from his mind. He was now running swiftly and wildly as if all the foes whom he most feared were in swift pursuit.

When at last he gained a high bank or sidehill behind the little barn which indicated that its owner was a peasant farmer, he halted once more, listening and eager to hear the sound which still he awaited.

His meditations were abruptly interrupted by the sound of a dull roar that seemed to increase and then abruptly fade away.

There was a flash in the midst of a cloud that appeared in the direction in which he was gazing. Instantly he concluded that his work had been successful. The bomb had exploded and the bridge consequently must have been destroyed.

A new fear, however, quickly touched Leon's heart, for he was aware that the explosion doubtless had been heard by others also and that soon soldiers would be approaching from many direc-

tions. He ran hastily forward and entered the little barn.

The place was empty. He saw a low ladder which led to the little loft and quickly mounted it. The structure, however, was old and there were holes in the thatched roof as well as in the sides.

Quickly making his way to one of these openings he peered in the direction from which the sound had come. A moment later he was aware that men were coming down the road. He heard also the sound of men running down the very hillside upon which he had stood a few minutes before. He felt cautiously of the revolver which he still carried in his belt, determined to defend himself to the very best of his ability.

Not one of the men, however, stopped at the little barn. Doubtless the German soldiers had no suspicion that anyone connected with the explosion was so far away from the bridge or was hiding in the rude little structure.

He heard the men calling to one another and the warning words of one who doubtless was an officer. Certain of the men whom he could see were sent ahead while others were held back and a speedy formation was made. It was plain that

the Germans were suspicious of an attack and had not thought that two American soldiers flying behind their lines would destroy a bridge toward which it was hoped the Allied army soon would be making its way.

The last of the German drives had been turned back. Already the directions of General Foch were revealing the plan of the great commander. The Germans already had been stopped and many of their troops had been turned backward. This, however, was only the beginning of the task that seemed wellnigh impossible, but there was elation among all the soldiers of the Allies over the success which had attended the beginning of this effort. Already General Mangin was striking terrific blows, and as Leon and Jacques both were in his army, naturally they were aware of some of the objectives which the French leader was eager to gain.

The relations between the American and the French soldiers had been most cordial. Friendships had been formed which were certain to outlast the Big War. The vivacity of the French soldiers, their courage under fire, and the tenacity with which they held to their ground had awak-

"He swung the leather rope slowly twice over his head and then cast it." (*Page* 47.)

ened the admiration of the Yankee soldiers. Indeed the temperaments of the two armies were not unlike, although the boys from the United States, having had much less experience in fighting, naturally at this time were not as well seasoned for the heavy tasks of the battle.

After two or three minutes had passed Leon stepped cautiously to the rear of the loft and peered intently at the side of the hill. Were there Germans still coming or had he seen all that were likely to assmble?

As soon as he was convinced that no men were immedately in the rear of the barn he hastily descended the ladder and fled from the place. He ran swiftly up the hillside and soon regained the road.

However, for an instant he hesitated whether or not he should follow the road or strive to make his way across the intervening fields. He hastily decided to follow the latter plan, still being well assured that he could find his way back to the place where Jacques had promised to meet him.

He glanced cautiously at the sky, fearful that if Jacques should return at that time in his ma-

chine the sound of its whirling wheels would quickly startle the Germans who already were aroused by the explosion of the bridge.

There was no indication of the presence of Jacques, however, to be seen. Doubtless it was too early for him to expect his friend, Leon assured himself. Meanwhile his supreme efforts were required in regaining the place from which he had started. Somehow Leon found that he was leaning far forward as he ran, perhaps instinctively feeling that he presented a smaller target by doing so. He was, however, running at his utmost speed. Across the field, past several little huts, all apparently deserted, he ran as if his enemies were in hot pursuit.

After the lapse of a few minutes he was rejoiced when he discovered not far before him the three trees which were the landmark of the place he was seeking. His speed, however, increased as he drew near the spot and when a few minutes later he flung himslf upon the ground near the roots of the largest tree he was almost breathless.

Speedily, however, he sat erect, peering around the huge trunk of the tree as if he was expecting

the approach of the German soldiers. A moment later he smiled as he thought how impossible it was for him to determine from which direction his enemies would approach if they were searching for him.

The silence of the night was now unbroken save by an occasional roar of the artillery far to the north or south. There were times too when the sky was illuminated by great flashes of red. These were sufficient to remind the perplexed young soldier that his position far behind the German line was not one of security.

Impatiently he longed for the return of Jacques, although he was aware that his companion almost certainly would be captured if he should attempt to come back at this time.

And yet Leon longed for his presence. Somehow he felt the lonesomeness of his position. To be absolutely alone, several miles behind the lines which his enemies had established, with his sole hope of return based upon the coming of his friend, and yet aware at the same time that if his friend should come then, doubtless he would be shot or made prisoner—all this did not tend to sooth the anxiety of Leon.

Resolutely he strove to remain calm and to think over his difficulty in such a manner as not to increase his alarm.

He soon decided that there was nothing for him to do except to await the return of Jacques. Without doubt his friend was not very far away and might prolong his absence still more until he was convinced that his enemies were not suspicious of his presence.

The moments, however, dragged slowly. At the same time Leon's fears increased. He was aware that men were marching past him not far away. From the direction in which they were moving he was positive they had returned from the bridge. He longed to ask them if the bridge had been destroyed.

However, he retained his position behind the tree, though he occasionally glanced in the direction in which the men had departed. Soon they were beyond his vision and he found himself again waiting for the coming of fresh bodies from the direction of the destroyed bridge, that is, if the bridge had been destroyed, of which fact Leon was somewhat dubious.

Another half-hour passed and the immediate

vicinity was still. Not a sound had been heard within fifteen minutes. Surely, he thought, it was time now for Jacques to come for him, to lead him to the place where he had left his machine. In a moment, however, Leon's thoughts were turned in other directions. There was a party of at least two hundred German soldiers approaching. In the dim light he could see the goosestep at which they were marching.

This, however, soon gave way to another movement as the men began to run. Evidently they were in great haste and it was equally plain that they were coming directly toward the place where he was hiding.

For an instant Leon hesitated. Should he remain where he then was and trust to the dimness of the light to hide him from the sight of the passing soldiers, or should he at once flee from the spot?

The latter course seemed to the young officer the better and instantly grasping his revolver in his right hand he arose and stealthily began to run from the place.

CHAPTER V

A DESPERATE TRICK

LEON had not advanced far from the tree before he hastily crouched behind a low mound of earth. He had seen a man approaching across the fields and was unable to determine whether or not he was armed.

In a brief time the young lieutenant's excitement increased when he recognized in the approaching man his friend Jacques. Immediately he gave the low whistle, the signal which they had agreed upon, and smiled as he saw the young Frenchman instantly halt and look quickly all about him.

Leon repeated the signal and advanced a few steps from his hiding-place. Jacques instantly turned in the direction from which the unexpected hail had come and speedily rejoined his friend.

"Where is your 'plane?" demanded Leon excitedly.

"It's about a mile from here," answered Jacques.

"Why did you leave it so far away? Why didn't you bring it nearer?"

"Because I was afraid it might bring us into great danger."

"We're in danger now," whispered Leon as he drew his friend with him behind the refuge he had found.

"Tell me," said Jacques simply.

"I placed the bomb all right under the bridge. There has been an explosion, but I do not know yet whether or not the bridge has been destroyed. The noise has called a good many Germans here and I have been hiding in an old barn back yonder."

"Are the soldiers here now?"

"I have not seen any for an hour. They all marched down toward the bridge and I cannot tell whether they found that the bomb had done its work or not. There was a loud report and the flash was very bright."

"I think the bridge is gone," said Jacques solemnly.

"I think so too," acknowledged Leon, "and I

wish I could say the same about these Boches I have seen around here."

"But you say you have not seen any for an hour."

"I have not *seen* them," acknowledged Leon, "but that doesn't mean that they are not here. What is the best thing for us to do, Jacques?"

"To go to the place where I left my 'plane."

"Did you see any soldiers?"

"Not very many. I had no difficulty in making my way to the place where the three trees stand. I do not think we shall have any more trouble getting back to the place where I left the aeroplane."

"Then we had better start right away."

"I think so."

There was no delay. Stealthily the two young soldiers stole along the rough and broken roadway, turning back in the direction from which Jacques had approached. They frequently stopped and listened while they peered intently all about them. The roar of the distant artillery still was heard and great flashes here and there illuminated the darkness of the night, but as yet they had not discovered any men in the immediate vicinity.

After each halt they resumed their flight, at times running and then again moving cautiously, so that not even their footsteps would reveal their presence.

So much time had been consumed in this little journey that when at last they drew near the place they were seeking it seemed to Leon that the morning must be at hand.

Darkness still lay over the land, however, when at last Jacques, cautiously placing his hand on the arm of his companion, said: "It is right over yonder just behind those woods you can see."

"Can you get a good start there?"

"I think so. There's a slope in the land and I think I can get a running start."

"We shall need it," said Leon. Then he became silent as the two young soldiers, still striving to move with great caution, advanced toward the place indicated by the Frenchman.

They entered the small woods to which reference has been made and moved slowly and with great caution from tree to tree. With every advance they halted again to discover whether or not others were there or enemies were watching their movements.

At last they came to the border, and there, only a few yards beyond them, Leon saw the 'plane in which he and Jacques had made their flight behind the German lines.

"There doesn't seem to be anybody here," whispered Leon.

To his surprise his companion did not answer.

Startled by the unexpected silence, Leon turned sharply and looked keenly at Jacques. The latter was standing motionless, looking in a direction to the north of the place where they were standing.

Leon's gaze quickly followed that of his comrade and his own consternation was great when he perceived three men approaching across the field in the direction of the place where the 'plane was lying.

A moment later the approaching party became aware of the aeroplane. For a moment they stopped and stared at the unexpected object, and then advanced quickly toward the place.

"They are German soldiers," whispered Jacques.

"I'm not sure," explained Leon.

"I know. I can see. You too will see in a minute."

Leon, however, was not fully convinced until the three approaching men advanced into the open space between the aeroplane and the spot where Jacques and Leon were crouching behind the trees on the border of the wood.

There was no question now as to the correctness of Jacques's statement. The men were German soldiers.

It was possible to hear their voices as in low tones they spoke to one another. It was evident too that they were suspicious of the discovery they had made. They were looking about them as if they were fearful of being attacked and once apparently were on the point of advancing toward the wood in which Jacques and Leon were concealed.

In his excitement Leon seized the arm of his friend, prepared to turn and flee at a moment's warning.

The Germans approached the border and then after peering in silence at the great trees they turned and retraced their way.

The two watching soldiers now were keenly

alert. Every step and movement of their enemies was keenly watched. They heard distinctly the low exclamation of surprise that escaped the lips of one of the trio when they had hastily examined the machine.

"They have found that the 'plane is French and there's no one in it," whispered Jacques. "They do not know how to account for its presence so far behind their lines. I think too they are puzzled to understand why no men are in it or near it. They must know that it cannot have been brought down because then it would be damaged and there's nothing wrong with the machine."

"They are coming this way," explained Leon, in a tense whisper. "We must run from this place."

"Wait," said Jacques simply, as he restrained his more impulsive companion. "They may not come inside the border."

Leon's heart was beating rapidly, and it seemed to the excited young lieutenant as if his breathing must be heard by the three men who were now walking directly toward the place where he was hidden. Prepared for instant flight, he neverthe-

less remained with his friend and awaited further developments.

The three Germans again drew near the border and then plainly in some confusion of mind stopped to converse.

Jacques, who was able to speak German soon was keenly excited in the conversation which he plainly overheard.

"What do you think?" he whispered to Leon. "They are planning to dress one of the men in an American uniform and he is to fly back in that machine to the American lines."

"What!" whispered Leon, alarmed as well as excited by the words of his companion. The loss of the machine in itself would mean that he and Jacques, far behind the German lines, would be left without any means of escape. "They must be fools," he said hastily.

"Perhaps one of them speaks English. I have found many Boches have lived in America. Perhaps he will try to pose as an American."

"He'll never do it. He'll never do it!" declared Leon.

"But he will try," said Jacques confidently, as

one of the trio hastily withdrew and ran in the direction from which they had approached.

The other two men seated themselves upon the ground and talked in tones so low that Jacques was unable to distinguish most of their conversation. Apparently, however, they were elated over the idea of the trick they had proposed.

What a foolhardy undertaking it was, thought Leon. Even if the man should attempt the flight and succeed in crossing the lines of the Allies he was without any knowledge of the signals or countersigns which were necessary from every 'plane as it returned from a flight over the enemy's lines or trenches. It was only in this way that full protection could be assured and the very trick which this German was about to attempt might be frustrated. Of course he was not the first one who had thought of the plan, and preparations to meet that very emergency had been made all along the lines of the Allies.

In a brief time the missing member of the German band came back carrying in his arms a suit of clothing or uniform which he cast upon the ground. He spoke in tones louder than his companions had used, and Jacques speedily reported

that they had agreed to attempt the flight which had been suggested.

In a brief time one of the number had donned the suit which has friend had brought, and together the three men approached the aeroplane.

In order to reassure themselves, they once more tested every part of the machine.

"They know what they're doing," grumbled Jacques. "They aren't fools, those Boches. I shall be very sorry to lose the machine."

"I shall be more sorry to be left here," said Leon, "but if one of those Huns really does steal our 'plane then I hope he will get what is coming to him and lots of it."

At last, apparently convinced that all parts of the 'plane were in working order and that there was an ample supply of gasoline, the soldier that had donned the American uniform took his place on board.

Jacques' statement that he understood his business was soon verified. Within a very brief time the machine soared into the air and speedily disappeared from sight. The two remaining German soldiers gazed after their departing friend as long

as he remained within sight, and then abruptly turned away and departed from the place.

When they disappeared Leon pulled his friend toward him as he said in a loud whisper, "Well, what do you think of that!"

CHAPTER VI

THE ARRIVAL FROM THE SKY

A CLEAR morning was dawning over the American lines in France. The sun had not yet appeared, but the eastern sky was all aglow. There was the promise of a perfect day. The July weather had been intensely warm and the prospect of another day of heat was not inspiring to the Yankee boys. Not far back from the front Lieutenant Earl Pratt was busy. There were duties of his own, and as he had recently received certain orders from the colonel of his regiment he was intent upon the tasks which had been assigned to him. He met Jesse Tiger who was just returning from his duty as guard. The young Indian half-mockingly saluted, though his expression was unchanged as he greeted his friend.

Abruptly, however, the Indian stopped and in a low voice said, "Lieutenant, do you see that?"

Earl stopped at once and gazed in the direction indicated by his friend. Not far away he saw an aeroplane manifestly headed for their lines. It was coming swiftly and as he watched its flight he was unable to discover anything that indicated that it was unusual in its appearance.

"Do you mean that 'plane?" he inquired.

"Yes," replied Jesse Tiger.

"What's the matter with it?"

"Why is it alone?"

"There's nothing very strange about that," replied Earl. "Perhaps it has been in a fight and is the only one to get away."

"That's not it."

Both young soldiers were silent for a brief time as they watched the approaching machine.

"We shall see," said Jesse Tiger.

Instantly he gave the signal which should bring a response from the aeroplane. Countersigns and signs alike were understood by many of the men and they were required to hail every machine returning from the direction of the German lines.

The aeroplane now was directly above them. It was plain too that only one man was operating

and Jesse Tiger repeated his signs. No response, however, came from the aeroplane, which now was moving less rapidly.

"He's trying to land," suggested Earl.

"But he must answer the signals."

In spite of his quiet manner it was manifest that the young Indian was keenly aroused. He turned and ran swiftly in the direction from which he had come. Earl also was sharing in his excitement and he hastily followed his friend.

Jesse Tiger soon stopped and after a hasty word to a company stationed near by, the signals were repeated, only this time flags were used. The operator apparently did not see the signals, or else he was ignoring them.

Word rapidly was sent to other sections and the silent calls to the operator were multiplied. The flyer now was circling about the place and approaching the ground.

"I'm telling you," said the young Indian in a low voice as he turned to Earl, who now had rejoined him, "there's something strange about that machine. We must find out more about it."

It was evident now that the aeroplane was about to land. It was approaching an open space far

from the hangar and this fact also increased the curiosity of the young red man. Together he and Lieutenant Earl ran to the place where the 'plane at last landed and the sole occupant prepared to step out upon the ground.

"Where did you come from?" demanded Earl, as he hailed the stranger, for the pilot was unknown to him. His face was round and his hair not much darker than the color of tow. Apparently he was about twenty years of age and physically was unusually strong. He was clad in the uniform of an American aviator, but as he glanced keenly at him Earl was convinced that he had never seen the man before. This fact, however, was not in itself startling, though it increased the mystery with which the newcomer was clothed.

Approaching the stranger, Earl said again, "Where did you come from?"

"Just now I come from behind the German lines."

"You did?" exclaimed Earl, in surprise. "What were you doing over there?"

"I was scouting. My engine went bad last night and I had to hide behind some woods until morning before I could fix it."

"Didn't you have any trouble in getting away?"

"Not a bit."

"What did you find?"

"I found the Boches a good deal disturbed by the drive which you have started."

"'You' have started, what do you mean by that?"

"Which *we* have started," said the aviator quietly.

"Oh, I see," answered Earl. His suspicions, however, had been strengthened by the words the stranger used. Why should he speak of "you" if he meant "we"? "Where are you going now?"

"To rejoin my regiment."

"Which is that?"

"The 106th."

Earl's suspicions were fast becoming positive. The man had ignored all the signals, or did not know them. Not once had he responded to the call which had come from different parts of the line. This fact, together with his slip in the use of "you," was certainly puzzling. "What will you do with your machine?" he asked.

"I will come back for that. I haven't had any breakfast, and I am afraid my gas is out."

Earl was listening intently for any slip in the words or manner of the man he was watching. His English was perfect and there was nothing to arouse his suspicions in the manner in which the stranger was speaking. "Come with me. I will take you," he suggested.

"I am not quite ready," said the aviator. "I must first look after my 'plane."

The explanation was not convincing. Earl was becoming more and more suspicious. Jesse Tiger, who now had joined him, was watching the aviator and although he had not spoken, Earl was convinced from the manner of his friend that he too was positive there was something suspicious if not worse in the landing of this man.

"If you have been up all night," Earl finally suggested, "you must be nearly all in. This man will get some one to look after your machine and I'll take you to your company."

For one brief moment Earl had felt that perhaps he was wrong in suspecting this man. The 106th was stationed near by and the natural manner in which the aviator had referred to it almost

made him believe that he had been unjust in his estimate of the stranger. However, the matter was too important to rest and he insisted upon sending Jesse Tiger for a helper.

"I shall stay here," said the stranger, "until my machine is ready. Then I will fly back to the hangar."

"I thought you were hungry."

"I am, but I can wait."

"Bring your helper back here and come as soon as you can," said Lieutenant Earl to the young Indian.

The latter at once departed from the place, and when it became evident to the aviator that Earl was planning to remain, the manner of the flyer quickly changed.

"I do not need you. I do not want you here," he said irritably.

"Then that's one reason why I must stay," answered Earl calmly.

"Why do you stay?"

"Because I want to make sure that the helper comes."

"It will not concern you."

"It does concern me very much."

"Why?"

"Because I want to make sure that your machine is all right. We haven't enough 'planes to waste in a time like this. Did you bring back a report?"

"I did."

"Let me have it and I'll give it to the colonel."

"I shall not let you have it, because I shall give it to the colonel myself." There was a tone in the man's speech now which indicated to the young officer that the stranger was alarmed.

"I shall stay right here until I am sure everything is all right," repeated Earl.

The aviator pretended to busy himself investigating the condition of his machine. He examined various parts, tested the wings, and looked into the engine. Earl watched him in silence, glancing occasionally in the direction in which Jesse Tiger had disappeared. He was eager for his friend to return because now he was almost fully convinced that something was wrong. He was aware that the aviator was armed and that he was fully able to defend himself if he should be attacked.

It was not long, however, before Lieutenant

Earl discovered Jesse Tiger approaching, and with him was the man whom he had sought. When the aviator discovered the approach of the two men Earl at first thought he was about to flee from the spot. In a moment, however, he regained his composure and did not speak until Jesse Tiger saluted the lieutenant and said, "Here is a man who can help."

"What's wrong?" inquired the helper, as he approached the stranger.

"I'm not quite sure, but my engine was knocking pretty hard and I'm afraid there's something wrong with it."

"Where did you get that machine?" inquired the helper quietly.

"It's the one I flew out in yesterday."

"In which hangar was it?"

"The one that belongs to the 106th."

"And you say you flew it yesterday?"

"Yes."

For a moment the helper was silent, and then he turned quietly to the lieutenant and in a low voice said, "That's the 'plane which your brother and Jacques had yesterday."

"What do you mean?" demanded Earl.

"I mean just what I say. They started just about sunset last night and that's the machine they had."

"Then what is this man doing with it?"

"You know as much about that as I do."

"There's something strange about this. I must find out more about it."

The young lieutenant turned abruptly and drew near the aviator, who still apparently was busied in inspecting his machine.

CHAPTER VII

JESSE TIGER'S SEARCH

"WHERE did you get that machine?" demanded Lieutenant Earl sharply.

The aviator looked up quickly at the unexpected demand, and for a moment stared blankly at the young officer. "I have told you two or three times," he answered sharply.

"But there are some things you have not told me."

"What have I not told you?"

"You have not told me that you are a German soldier, that somehow you came into possession of this 'plane and are dressed in an American uniform, that you started over here thinking you would land and find out what our boys are doing and then carry the information back to the other Boches."

For a moment the German, for there was no question now in Earl's mind that the stranger

belonged to the enemy's forces, seemed ready to flee. He glanced hastily about him in every direction, but as he saw men approaching he was aware that his attempt to escape would be futile.

"There's no use," said Earl quietly. "I see that you understand English perfectly and have no doubt you have been in America. Where were you in the United States?"

"Brooklyn."

"What were you doing?"

"I used to spend my summers working at Coney Island. In the winter I was a paper hanger."

"And now you're a good deal worse than that."

"No, I am the same."

"That may be, and yet you're worse than anything you have told. You are a spy. You have come over the line in a French 'plane and you're wearing the uniform of an American soldier. Do you understand what that means?"

The German was silent as he gazed stolidly at Earl.

"Now," continued the lieutenant, "I want you to hand over that pistol you have."

Without a word the stranger drew his pistol,

which he extended handle first to Earl. Perhaps he was more easily induced to do this because Jesse Tiger was standing near by and as his rifle was in his hands and his eyes betrayed a keen interest in what was taking place there was an added inducement for quickness on the part of the prisoner, for such he now was.

"This is a Luger," said Earl, as he grasped the weapon and carefully inspected it.

"Give it to me," spoke up Jesse Tiger.

"What will you do with it?"

"I'll shoot Germans."

"But you have to have a particular brand of ammunition," said Earl with a smile. "These pistols aren't built on the plan of ours and the ammunition is very different also."

"That makes no difference," asserted Jesse Tiger. "I shall get some ammunition."

"Where?"

"The Germans will give it to me," answered the young Indian grimly.

"It's too bad, Fritz," laughed Earl, turning again to his prisoner. "If you had known our countersigns, you might have pulled your trick on

us. I suppose you thought when you went back that you would get a couple of tons of iron crosses for the information you brought."

"No, I did not think so," answered the German, "I thought I should get only one iron cross."

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I'm afraid you won't get anything but prison fare for a while and what you'll get after that I can't tell you."

A more disappointed soldier it would have been difficult to find than the young German prisoner. Aware now that his project had failed and that he was destined to be placed with the prisoners, if not dealt with more severely, the folly of his attempt seemed to penetrate his mind.

However, his manner did not change and although he glanced occasionally about him, his glance always returned to Earl.

"Jesse, do you really want this pistol?" inquired Earl.

"I do."

"And do you really think you can get some German ammunition?"

"I know I can. I shall get some while you are taking this Boche back to the prison camp."

"We must search him first," explained Earl.

At a word from him, the Indian joined him, and a thorough search of the German soldier was made. Nothing, however, was found save a few strips of ammunition, which Jesse Tiger declared would not be sufficient for him even for one day.

"When are you going to try to get your ammunition?" inquired Earl of the Indian.

"I shall go just as soon as the captain will give me permission."

"I'm afraid he won't give you any permission, Jesse, unless you salute him. They tell me that I'm the only officer in the American army that you ever salute."

"I salute Captain Oakley," retorted Jesse Tiger. His face did not betray any signs of anger or amusement at the charge of his friend. It was true that he was willing to pay his respects only to Lieutenant Earl and to Captain Oakley. The value of the young Indian as a battalion scout, however, was so great that this peculiarity on his part had been overlooked and as he was busy most of the time in his exploits, few of the men knew of his failure to comply with the regulation salute.

"I got a pair of field glasses for Captain Oak-

ley yesterday," explained Jesse Tiger. "He told me he wanted a pair very much, so I went out in a trench and brought them back."

"Did you get anything else?"

"I did not bring back anything else."

"Did you shoot any Germans?"

"I killed two Huns," admitted Jesse, speaking as lightly as if he was describing his hunting in the western forests. "I got them in a dugout over there," he explained, pointing as he spoke in the direction of the German lines. "Now I shall go for some ammunition."

"Good luck to you!" called Earl, as he departed with his prisoner. He was planning to stop on the way at the hangar of the battalion and explain that there was a machine which needed to be looked after. Somehow it had not yet occurred to the young lieutenant that any evil had befallen Leon and Jacques.

As he turned away, however, this thought came to him with full force. Instantly he demanded of his prisoner, "What happened to my brother and the aviator who was with him?"

"I did not see him."

"You mustn't talk to me like that," declared

Earl. "Here you come back with his machine and you haven't any explanation to give how you got it."

"I have told you. I found it behind the woods. When I found it I thought I would fly over here and maybe I would find some of my Brooklyn friends."

"How many years were you in America?"

"Seven."

"Why didn't you stay there?"

"I wish I had."

"Then why didn't you?"

"Because I came home to see my mother. I had taken out my first papers and expected to become an American citizen. While I was in Germany war was declared and they made me go as a soldier."

"Yes, I have heard that story before," said Earl dryly. "Do you really expect me to believe that you found this machine and that there wasn't any American near it?"

"I have told you the truth."

Earl said no more as he silently led his prisoner toward the detention camp.

Meanwhile, Jesse Tiger had hastened to find

Captain Oakley. His search was not long continued, and, saluting that officer in his formal and somewhat stiff manner, he said, "I would like a pass."

"For where?" inquired the captain, who knew the young Indian scout well and already had assisted him several times in obtaining permission to go out alone into No Man's Land.

"I must get some ammunition," explained Jesse Tiger.

"But you can get that without a pass."

"Not the kind I must have."

"What kind is that?"

"The Boche kind."

"What do you mean?" demanded the captain sharply.

"It is this way," explained the Indian. "Lieutenant Pratt and I captured a German soldier who flew over our lines in a French 'plane."

"What do you mean?"

"It is as I am telling you. The man was dressed as an American soldier and claimed to belong to the 106th. We found out, though, that he did not know any of the countersigns and he finally owned up that he was a German soldier."

"But where did he get the machine? Had it been brought down?"

"No; it is one which Lieutenant Leon and his friend flew in last night. They were to go behind the German lines and blow up one of the bridges."

"I'm afraid they got into trouble," said the captain in a low voice.

"Yes, it does look so," agreed Jesse Tiger, "but I must get some ammunition for this pistol which Lieutenant Pratt says is a Luger and that it must have some German ammunition."

"I'll give you a pass," said the captain, after a brief silence. "I'm afraid, though, Jesse, that you're going straight into trouble."

"I do not fear. I shall find some Boche who will give me his ammunition."

"Well, good luck to you. I wish you would report to me when you come back so that I may know that you're safe. With all my heart I hope I shall prove to be a false prophet this time."

Jesse Tiger at once departed and the captain resumed the task in which he had been previously engaged.

The Indian scout had no difficulty as soon as he presented his pass in being permitted to go

through the lines. He selected a spot where very few cannon or men had been stationed. Not far away were rocks and bushes, and toward these he stealthily and successfully, as far as his watching comrades could see, proceeded on his way.

Halting for a brief rest and to peer about him, Jesse Tiger then resumed his crawling method of passing toward the German line. He was aware that certain American snipers had been stationed in advance of the place where he then was standing, and toward these he advanced.

Arriving at the place among the rocks which he was seeking, he discovered several of his comrades, some crouching behind the stones and some hidden among the trees, watching for opportunities to fire at the enemy.

Jesse Tiger was recognized at once, and as his activities were well known he was heartily welcomed. The Indian's skill with the rifle or the pistol was not great, but it was frequently declared that there was not an American soldier in France who was so able to crawl into the enemy lines without being detected as he.

"They have a machine gun nest over yonder," suggested James Green, a member of Jesse's bat-

talion. "They have been bothering us a good deal."

"Where is it?" inquired Jesse, slightly lifting his head from the ground on which he was lying.

"It is in that little house off to the right."

"Then I shall get my ammunition in that little house," said Jesse quietly.

CHAPTER VIII

TWO WOMEN

THE young French soldier ignored the words of his companion and continued to gaze in the direction in which the two German soldiers had departed. Indeed, so intent was Jacques in the matter that even after Leon spoke to him several times he had not withdrawn his gaze.

It would have been easy for either of the two young aviators to have drawn his pistol and shot at the retiring Germans. They both were aware, however, that such action would bring upon themselves a greater injury than they could visit upon the enemy. The reports of their pistols would be a quick signal for all the Huns within hearing to rush toward the spot from which the sounds had come. It was therefore due to their precautions and not to their desires that they refrained from firing upon the departing men.

At last Jacques turned to Leon and said, "Well, here we are, my friend, now what are we to do next?"

"The conditions are not exactly what we would choose if we had our own way about it," replied Leon demurely. "Let me see, we're both unwounded as yet. We have our pistols and some ammunition. We haven't anything to eat or drink, and from present prospects I do not think we are likely to have anything soon. In addition to that, we are not far enough from any of the Boches to make sure that they will not find us at almost any time. Those are our assets. Now, our liabilities are more than enough to eat up all we have on the other side of the ledger. If we start out from these woods we are certain to be seen. If we stay here, we shall either be found or starve. Now, the question is, which shall we do? Have you any choice in the matter?"

Lieutenant Leon's good nature was a part of his philosophy of life. Even in a time of great peril he smiled or found some cause for a joking remark. All this did not mean that he was incapable of fear, for even now he was greatly alarmed for their safety. His manner, however,

did not change, even in the time of greatest peril, and only those who were closely associated with him were aware of the deep excitement in the heart of the young soldier. In these respects he differed from his brother. Earl was uniformly staid. To him life was a serious matter. Indeed, Leon frequently joked him about his inability to see a joke, but Earl was devotedly attached to his brother and no one gloried more than he when Leon aroused the mirth of his associates.

At this time, however, Jacques had no difficulty in discovering that his companion's fear was great. He too was alarmed, but like many of his countrymen in the war his quick, impulsive manner had given way to a more staid method of expression.

"We cannot stay here, anyway," remarked Jacques at last.

"On the other hand," said Leon, "we must stay here for a while. I think our best plan will be to hide in or behind these trees until it is near sunset. By that time we shall know whether many are passing this way or not. If we find that there is likely to be no immediate trouble we can then make our plans to try some scheme to get away."

"The prospect is not good."

"I agree with you thoroughly, Jacques, but the very fact that there is something hard to be done ought to make us both brace up and do it. If we were home in our beds and had our mothers to look after us, we shouldn't either one of us have any need for all the courage and strength we must now use. In my opinion we are up against the hardest thing we ever faced. The only satisfaction I get is in the possibility that the bridge has been blown to flinders."

"It is blown to flinders," remarked Jacques soberly. "If we try to get out of these woods our uniforms will at once show who we are and why we are here. The Germans do not wait very long in convicting a spy."

"We're not spies!" retorted Leon quickly. "We are wearing the uniform of our own men. They may make us prisoners of war, but they cannot shoot us as spies."

"The Germans can, for they have done it."

"They cannot make us spies, no matter if they do shoot us, but the thing for us to do is to plan how they can do neither. We must stay right here behind these trees and not try to get away

unless something comes up for us to use. We may find just as we did in Belgium some old peasant who is leaving with his horse and wagon."

"I fancy you'll not find any old peasant left with a horse and wagon. The Germans have taken everything."

"That's just what I said," remarked Leon lightly. "We probably shan't find any such thing, but that doesn't mean that we may not find something else just as good to take its place."

Conversation ceased and both young soldiers became silent. Throughout their whispered talk they had been keenly observant of all the adjacent region. Not a person had been seen nor had any soldiers appeared. The silence that rested over the region had been unbroken. There was little to indicate that they were on the border of the great struggle of the Big War.

Slowly the minutes passed, and as the hours departed Leon was positive that the information he had received when he was a lad that "Sixty minutes make one hour," was incorrect. There must be at least one thousand minutes in every passing hour.

Late in the afternoon when still no persons ap-

peared and the continuous reports of the distant cannon were the only sounds that had been heard, Leon once more turned to his friend and said, "I think I can find the way back to that little barn in which I hid. Don't you think it will be better for us to try to make it?"

"Why shall we be better off there than here?" inquired Jacques.

"We shall less likely be discovered. It may be, too, that we can find some one to get us some water or a bit of food. Here we can't get anything."

"I'm ready," said Jacques. "Do you want to start at once?"

"Yes," answered Leon promptly.

The sun was now below the horizon. The light was becoming dimmer all about them, and although their peril might be increased by that fact, they were both hopeful that if they should be seen, their uniforms might not be recognized and consequently they would not be taken.

Leon stealthily led the way and the two young soldiers, crouching as they ran and making most excellent time, retraced the way over which Leon had previously come and succeeded in entering the little barn.

It was but the work of a moment to find the low ladder and in the broken loft both boys, when at last they gained it, felt relieved.

Only a few yards from the barn was a rude little cottage. The walls were all standing, but the place showed every mark of neglect. Apparently it had escaped the ravages of war thus far, but the absence of men was manifest by the dilapidated appearance not only of the little barn but of the entire place as well.

Suddenly Leon grasped his friend by his arm as he pointed excitedly toward the rear of the little cottage. From the door were emerging two women; one evidently was old, for she was bent and was walking with difficulty, leaning heavily upon a cane. Beside her was a woman who appeared to be much younger, though in the dim light it was difficult for either of the soldiers to determine whether she was a girl or woman.

Both Leon and Jacques were excited by the appearance of the strangers because now they were hopeful it might be possible for them to obtain food and water. There was nothing in the barn which required the attention of either of the

women and yet somehow Leon was convinced they were approaching the place in which he and his friend were hiding.

His surmise proved to be correct, as the two women drew near the entrance. Jacques explained to Leon that the young woman, who was now seen to be a girl only eighteen or nineteen years of age, was doing her utmost to soothe her excited companion.

"*Je vais quérir un grand pent-être,*" mumbled the older woman.

"What is she saying?" whispered Leon.

"'I go in search of a great perhaps,'" explained Jacques. "Probably she does not know that she is quoting the words which Rabelais is said to have uttered when he was dying. It may be that she too has some such thought in her mind."

"It wouldn't be strange," said Leon, who was keenly watching the woman who now stepped in the open doorway.

"*Je ne cherche qu'un,*" mumbled the old woman.

The soothing words of her companion were not

heard by the boy, and as Leon glanced again inquiringly at his companion Jacques said, "She is saying, 'I am seeking but one.' "

"What do you suppose she means? Do you think she is looking for us?"

"I do not know."

"*Peine forte et dure,*" said the old woman.

"That's so. That's so," whispered Jacques.

"What is so?"

"She is saying," explained the young Frenchman, "that she is suffering from a heavy and hard punishment."

"There isn't any question about that," declared Leon, "but what are they doing? Why do they stand there? What are they waiting for? You said she was saying that she was looking for some one."

"No," said Jacques, "I said she was saying 'I seek but one.' She very likely is referring to some one of her own family who has been lost or taken away by the Boches. It is strange," he added, "that this girl is left here. The Germans don't often leave behind them any of the girls or young women, for they send them away with the

old men and the young boys to do their hard work on the farms."

"*Tout mon possible,*" said the old woman, as she shook her head and resumed her mumbling.

"What does that mean?" inquired Leon. "What is she saying?"

"She is explaining that she will try to be quiet all she possibly can. She will use all her power."

"*Loyal en tout—Je suis prêt.*"

"She declares that she is ready to do her best or die."

"Does either of them say anything about any men being here?"

"Not a word," replied Jacques. "Shall I speak to them?"

"Yes," said Leon quickly. "Be careful not to frighten them, but I am sure it will be best for you to explain to them who we are and why we are here."

CHAPTER IX

A VISIT BY THE GERMANS

NEITHER of the women appeared to be startled by the abrupt appearance of Jacques. Leon was unable to hear what they said, but Jacques' voice was soft and low, and after a moment it was apparent that the confidence of the women was restored.

After a brief conversation Jacques returned to the foot of the ladder and in a low voice called to his friend, "Come on, Leon, it's all right."

Without a word, Leon descended the ladder and at the invitation of the women accompanied his friend into the little house.

The place was not attractive. It had been long since the floor or the walls had been scrubbed, and there was an air of discouragement manifest in all the furnishings in the little room in which he stood. However, in the dim light he turned to look upon the faces of the women and saw there a determina-

tion so manifest and a courage so high that other things were forgotten.

Leon, who, as has been said, was not able to converse in French, was told by Jacques that two old women lived in the old house and that the third, who was much younger, had joined them a few weeks before this time. She had found refuge there in the flight she had made from her home at the coming of the German army.

Leon again turned with interest to the younger woman, and was convinced that she was indeed only a girl. She was dressed in a costume similar to that which the older women wore and her face was discolored and her hair arranged in a manner that increased the impression of her age.

Leon was puzzled to account for her presence and was convinced that she had been accustomed to very different surroundings. The expression of her face, and her manner as well, indicated that she was a girl of refinement. He knew that he would be interested in her story, but as he was unable to converse with her at this time he turned to his companion, who at that moment brought him a small wooden bucket filled with water.

Never in Leon's life had anything before tasted

so good as this draught of cool water, fresh from the well.

Even the girl laughed when at last Leon returned the pail to Jacques and said, "They say that a man consists of four or five buckets of water in which a little mineral matter has been mixed. I believe it now, though I didn't when my teacher in the high school told me that."

The girl laughed as Leon spoke and turning quickly to her, the young man inquired, "Do you speak English?"

She did not reply and acted as if she did not hear, for she spoke quickly to one of the old women.

Some very simple food was soon placed before the young soldiers and both boys were as eager for this as they had been for the water which they had drunk. It was only coarse bread that was given, but Leon was convinced that the taste was finer than that of the finest wheat.

In the midst of the repast, however, there was an abrupt pause when the sound of approaching men outside the house was heard.

Without a word the girl ran quickly to Leon, and before he could protest, drew a mask from a

hidden place in the wall and quickly fastened it upon his face. Then upon him she drew a dress which evidently had belonged to one of the old women of the household. With equal swiftness she placed some powder on his face and drew a cap over his head. Then she insisted that he should obey her by lying upon the rude bed that stood in the corner of the same room.

Leon hastily obeyed, and when he found himself in the position into which he had been forced he looked around for his friend, but Jacques was nowhere to be seen.

At that moment, however, the door was flung open and a young German officer entered the room. The light was still dim, but was sufficient to enable him to see the occupants of the place. He gave no heed to the older woman and when Leon saw that the girl now was bent as if she too was carrying the weight of many years, he smiled in spite of his own peril as the officer turned away and approached the bed where he was lying.

A quick glance was all that was required and the young German was convinced that the occupant of the bed was old and feeble like the other inmates of the house.

Doubtless in his experiences he had found many places like this and was prepared for the discovery that there were no men to be found and that only the old women or the little children had been left behind.

He did not long remain in the room but Leon did not dare leave his hiding-place until long after the man had departed. He was now doubly anxious for Jacques. He had slight question that his comrade had fled from the house and perhaps had sought again the refuge of the loft of the little barn. Had the soldiers discovered him there? Leon blamed himself when he thought of the motive which doubtless had driven his friend out of the building. He had thought to save the women the sight of the brutality or worse which might follow the discovery of a French soldier in the home of the peasant. However, it was impossible now to change conditions, and Leon resolutely remained in the place into which he had been thrust until at last the girl came to the bedside and indicated, by pulling his hand, that it was safe for him to arise.

The room was dark and Leon was unable to see the faces of any of the inmates. He was eager to

discover the fate of his comrade, but when he started toward the door the girl hastily interposed and although she did not speak, protested against his departure.

Unaware how many had been in the band of German soldiers that had halted at the place, Leon decided that it was wise for him to heed the advice. If Jacques had been discovered by the Germans, he was now a prisoner in their hands. If he had not been found, he would soon return to the little building. Meanwhile, there was nothing to do except to possess his soul in patience.

Accordingly, Leon, who was now thoroughly wearied by the experiences of the day, prepared to stretch himself upon the floor. He stopped quickly, however, when the girl indicated that he was to sleep in the other of the two rooms into which the first floor was divided. He obediently followed her as she led the way into the front room, but as soon as she withdrew he cast himself upon the floor and in spite of his peril was soon sleeping soundly. For a time he had intended to remain awake, hoping that Jacques would return, but at last his weariness overcame him and his eyes closed. Jacques had not come.

It was not fully light when he opened his eyes. For a moment it was difficult for him to understand where he was. Speedily, however, he recalled the events of the preceding day and night and in his anxiety for his friend he hastily arose.

He did not know where the inmates of the house were sleeping, but when he was about to open the door leading into the other room he was surprised when the young girl who had aided him in escaping the attention of the German soldier now stood before him.

Still she did not speak, but taking his hand she indicated that he was to follow her.

The young lieutenant quickly obeyed, but his surprise was keen when he discovered that his conductor led him outside the building and that evidently she was prepared to help him escape from the place.

To Leon's great surprise, she led the way to the rear of the little barn, where he discovered two large dogs chained to a stake that had been driven into the ground. Neither he nor Jacques had seen the animals the preceding evening, and he was surprised now at their presence. Had his un-

known friend secured them from some other place, or had they been hidden in the house when the soldiers were received?

Leon's chief interest now was in Jacques. Not a word had been heard from him, and the fact that he did not appear during the night indicated that some evil had befallen him. He was unable to talk to the girl who now was freeing the dogs. It was plain that they knew her and also that they were exceedingly fond of her. This fact indicated also that they did not belong to some other household. He was eager to ask her if she had seen anything of his friend, but apparently it was useless to try to talk to her. He was well aware that Jacques was competent to look after himself as far as any one could be able to do that in the perilous position behind the German lines.

There was nothing for him to do except to obey the suggestions of the girl, who evidently was doing her utmost to assist the young soldier. Into his pocket he thrust several pieces of bread which she gave him, and then as she motioned for him to follow her Leon obeyed.

She was holding both dogs by a strong leash or

small chain, Leon was unable to determine which. It was plain too that she was thoroughly familiar with the region, for in a brief time she began to run and Leon was compelled to move swiftly in order to keep pace with her.

She followed a pathway which led directly toward the stream over which had been the bridge that he had done his utmost to destroy. They were unmolested on their way, and when at last she approached the bank, Leon was startled when he saw that the remains of the very bridge under which he had placed the bomb was near by.

For a moment he gazed with interest at the ruined structure and rejoiced that the bridge was gone, whatever the evil now which might overtake him.

The stream here was at least forty feet wide. Leon did not know its name or whether it was the beginning of one of the larger rivers or not. At all events, in order to rejoin his friends he must cross to the opposite shore, and he was a very indifferent swimmer.

In a moment, however, the purpose of the girl in bringing the dogs became evident. She patted them for a moment, pointed eagerly to the oppo-

site bank, and then at her low word of command they entered the water.

She then handed the leashes to Leon, which she had tied together, and indicated that he was to go into the stream clinging to a small log and was to be towed to the opposite shore by the faithful animals.

CHAPTER X

AMMUNITION FOR THE LUGER

MEANWHILE it is time for us to return to Jesse Tiger, whom we left in the company of his friends among the rocks not far from the little house in which was a nest of German machine guns.

Jesse Tiger was filled with the spirit of battle. His dark eyes were almost blazing in the intensity with which he watched the little house in the distance. In this respect he was not unlike many others among the young red men who had joined the soldiers of the United States.

In a beautiful valley in South Dakota, along the banks of the Grand River, is a little settlement which bears the name of Bullhead. Not far away is the scene of Custer's last fight against the Sioux warriors who had surrounded his force. This settlement also is near the place where Marcellus Redtomahawk, one of the bravest of the Indian

police, in a hand-to-hand combat, slew Sitting Bull. Indeed, there are few places in the United States in which more plotting has been done against the Government than in this valley along the Grand River.

What a change has come over the region, as well as over the feelings of the red men! Not long ago at Bullhead seven young braves, all full bloods, volunteered at one time for the military service of the United States in the war against the Kaiser. Their very names indicate the old life which now is filled with the new spirit. These young soldiers were Eugene Younghawk, James Weaselbear, Samuel Beavercrow, James Villagecenter, John Ironthunder, Joseph Leaf and Thomas Pheasant.

Not long before this time John Peters, a Menominee Indian serving with Company A, First Engineers, fell in a battle with the Germans. When the news of his death reached his old home in Wisconsin the American flag at the Keshena Indian School was flown at half-mast. Throughout the county the old women of the dead soldier's tribe revived the ancient custom of their fathers of wailing for the dead. For days the cries of the

aged Indian women as they mourned for John Peters were heard in that land. It was claimed that he was the first Indian to enlist in the American Army after war was declared. It is certain that he was among the first to cross the ocean. And there are many of his race who are eager to avenge his death.

Near Fort Worth, Texas, at Camp Bowie, Captain Walter Veach commanded Company E, 142d Infantry. This was composed entirely of Indian volunteers. More than a thousand Indians are said to have been in the camp at one time.

The Winnebagos early in the war formed a company of their own young braves. Generally the Government does not favor separate or distinct Indian units, as it wishes to merge all the men of different races and place the aborigines upon an equal footing with the white soldiers. But wherever they are found, whether in separate companies or in parts of other units, they are reported as being earnest and efficient, silent observers and equal to the best. Above all, they are eager to fight.

Nearly all the tribes are represented among the soldiers and some of the men are officers ranking

as high as major. And they are found in many different branches of the service. For example, one Indian helps to run a flock of balloons, and there are many of the red men in the aviation section. Some have become skillful in wireless telegraphy, while others are found in the technical divisions of the army. A large number of the civilized Indians have received military training at the various Government schools. As there are about seventy-five big schools for the Indians, it is at once seen what power they have as recruiting stations.

What a difference there is between the early days and the present! The Indian wars in New England, New York, and in the West have given place to a more friendly feeling, although since 1831 young Indians have been accepted as volunteers in the army of the United States and have made an honorable record.

In the present struggle, however, the spirit and the bravery of the Indian race seem to have been more enthusiastically engaged than in any former war.

Meanwhile Jesse Tiger crawled among the rocks, steadily making his way nearer the house in

which he had been informed the nest of machine guns was located. Even his friends paused a moment to watch him as he wriggled his way between the great stones or crossed the short open spaces.

It was not long before he no longer could be seen by his friends. And they turned again to the tasks in which they were engaged.

The hours passed slowly, but no indication was given that the young Indian scout had accomplished his purpose. Apparently the Germans still retained the ammunition which he declared he would obtain. Occasionally from the house, although from only two sides, came the sharp reports of the machine guns. After each discharge, however, silence for a time rested over the place and there were no indications that any one was inside the rude little building.

But Jesse Tiger was not unmindful of his task. He had crept steadily and successfully to the border of the stones and there he waited. Between him and the house not more than forty feet intervened. Why he had not been discovered he himself could not explain, but thus far in his endeavor he had been successful, and not once had a sniper fired in his direction. But the German ammuni-

tion for his pistol had not yet been obtained.

At last the sun began to sink lower in the western sky. Night soon would be at hand, but the young scout had no thought of waiting until darkness came before he should make his final effort to secure the ammunition he desired.

At that moment he saw through the window from which all glass and sash had disappeared a man who was working at one of the guns. Jesse had already concluded that there were only two men in the building. One had been firing through the opening where a window had once been on the western side and the other had used the side to the south.

Suddenly Jesse Tiger drew his pistol and fired at the man who presented so tempting a mark. Instantly it was manifest that he had failed, for the German quickly swung his gun around and discharged it in the direction from which the sound of the pistol had come. It was plain, too, that there was a sudden commotion or excitement within the room, for the sound of the two men moving quickly about was plainly heard.

A moment later there was a spraying of bullets at the place from which Jesse Tiger had fired,

but the Indian was no longer there. Instantly, as soon as he had discharged his pistol, he had crawled several yards away and now was crouching behind one of the stones.

The attempt to spray the place was speedily abandoned, for after the first shot the firing was not repeated.

Jesse Tiger glanced at the place from which he had crawled and smiled grimly as he congratulated himself that he now was where he was. For a time the firing from the house ceased. Apparently the shot which Jesse Tiger had fired had been a surprise, for up to this time the watchers had been unable to see the inmates and consequently had not fired.

Jesse Tiger, however, had no mind to give up. The sun now was just above the western horizon. The light was still clear and it was possible for him to see any one who might pass the window, but as yet neither of the men had stepped within range.

Grimly the young Indian took from his pocket a hand grenade. He was an expert with this and had decided to trust his skill in throwing rather than his ability as a marksman.

On a different angle now he slowly and cautiously crept toward the house. He was confident that he was not within the direct range of the gunners, who would be compelled to swing their heavy weapons around in order to reach the place where he was. He was well aware that the danger was great because there were other weapons than machine guns available. Forty feet seemed a long distance. He crawled a yard or two and then lying flat upon the ground waited to see whether or not his movements had been discovered. But every effort carried him nearer the house, and at last he succeeded in reaching the side of the building. He was at last six feet from the window and he was well aware that doubtless some one was watching there every minute.

Cautiously Jesse Tiger rose from the ground and took his hand grenade from his pocket. What he did he must do quickly. As soon as he had the grenade ready he leaped forward to the window and with one wild whoop flung it at the man whom he saw before him, about to fire the machine gun again.

A terrific explosion followed. The sound seemed to rend the very walls of the house. Jesse

Tiger saw the man at whom he had thrown the missile fall to the floor and the gun itself appeared to be torn and twisted out of all form.

All this the scout had seen in an instant. He was aware, however, that there was at least one more man in the building and that without question he would try to avenge his comrade's death.

Instantly Jesse Tiger dropped to the ground beneath the window and more rapidly than it is possible to conceive made his way to the opposite side of the house.

With incredible quickness the young Indian grasped a wooden spout that came from the roof, at one time evidently the means by which the inmates of the house had obtained their water. Deftly he made his way to the roof of the little building. Climbing along its broken and slippery edges, he gained a place directly behind what was left of the rude chimney.

Having gained that protection, he crouched flat upon the roof and remained motionless.

Soon he heard the sound of a man moving cautiously about in the room below. There had been no firing, however, since he had flung his hand grenade. He had no question about the death of

the man at whom he had hurled the deadly missile, but he was also confident that the second man was still unwounded.

Suddenly Jesse Tiger became tense. He heard a sound which indicated that the man below was trying to leave the building.

Out from the house some one stepped cautiously and soon was within sight of the watching scout.

Jesse Tiger, motionless as the ridge boards against which he was pressing, waited until this man had come within sight. He was a German soldier and therefore an enemy.

The young scout quickly drew from his belt the pistol which he carried and fired at the departing man. Twice he repeated his effort and a moment later saw the German fall to the ground.

Jesse waited several minutes to discover whether or not the man moved. He had had many experiences with the treacherous activities of the Germans and was of no mind to be caught by any of their tricks at this time.

When five minutes had passed the Indian slowly descended from his place on the roof and holding his pistol in his hand cautiously approached the

place where the German was lying. He would make certain that the man had been killed before he investigated further.

One glance, however, was sufficient to convince Jesse Tiger that his enemy was dead. Quickly he rolled the body upon its back and unfastening the belt in which his cartridges were carried seized it and swiftly ran from the place.

CHAPTER XI

ANOTHER BELT

JESSE TIGER stopped abruptly when he again came near the little house. He was startled by a sound as of some one moving within the building. Apparently, after all, he had not killed the German who had been working the machine gun, for there was no mistaking the evidence of his own ears.

Some one certainly was moving in the little building. He abruptly turned and cautiously approached the corner of the structure. He crept beneath the window and peered over the sill and discovered that the man whom he supposed he had shot was moving about the room. It was plain that he had been injured by the grenade, but he was still able to pass from one side of the room to the other.

For a moment the young Indian hesitated, not knowing whether others had come to the rescue

of the German or not. A brief delay convinced him that the man was the only one within the building. Drawing his pistol, Jesse Tiger instantly leaped through the open window and confronted the man who was now leaning against the wall of the room.

Aiming his weapon at the defenseless soldier, Jesse said quietly, "You must surrender."

It was plain that the man did not understand the words that were spoken, but there was no mistaking Jesse's meaning when a moment later he motioned for his prisoner to hold up both hands. It was only the work of a moment to bind the German's arms and then the young Indian hastily made a search of his person. He found papers that he was unable to read, a few trinkets which the German evidently had taken from children in the houses he had entered and a few other articles of minor importance.

His belt of ammunition, however, at once attracted the eyes of the eager young scout, and he speedily relieved the German of his burden.

Hastily he bound the belt about his own waist above the one which he had already taken from the dead soldier and motioning for his prisoner to

precede him, he started toward the American lines.

It was not long, however, before Jesse Tiger was convinced that the man whom he had taken was unable to walk without help. Convinced of this condition, Jesse Tiger at once thrust his arm under that of the German and helped him forward a few paces. The man then stumbled and fell and Jesse Tiger was positive that he was not shamming. The man was unable to advance further.

It was then that Jesse Tiger drew forth his first-aid kit and at once proceeded to assist the man who had surrendered. He found several wounds that had been torn by pieces of the grenade and it was difficult at first for him to stop the bleeding.

However, after a few minutes had passed he was convinced that his prisoner was able to resume his journey and assisting him by permitting him to lean heavily upon him, he turned again toward the place where his friends were stationed.

It was not long before the young Indian and his prisoner were discovered by the Americans. Fortunately he had returned to the very place from which he had departed, and was at once recognized by his friends. They laughingly inquired

who his companion was, but Jesse ignored all inquiries and at once proceeded with the Boche toward the place where he hoped to find Lieutenant Earl.

His search was soon rewarded, and as he approached the young lieutenant, Jesse Tiger respectfully saluted.

"I have the Boche ammunition," he said quietly as he displayed the two belts which he wore about his waist.

"You have something more than that, I see," said Lieutenant Earl.

"Yes, I have a prisoner. I took his ammunition and I took some more from another whom I left dead out there on the field."

"Where did you get them?"

"In a little house where they had set up their machine gun. I hit one gun and one of the men with a hand grenade, and there wasn't very much left of the machine gun. Then I crawled up on the roof and waited. The other man tried to run from the building. I got him," he added simply.

"And you took his ammunition, too?"

"Yes, I have it. This is his belt," explained Jesse, pointing to the lower of the belts that

adorned his person. "I had to get something I could use with the Luger pistol."

"And I see you succeeded," laughed Earl. "Now what are you going to do with this man?"

"I shall turn him over to you."

"That's all right," said Earl lightly. "I'll attend to him. I'll send him back to the rear. He looks as if he might be a good case for a hospital. I think too I had better take him at once."

Without waiting for any further conversation or making any further investigations, Lieutenant Earl turned from the place, ordering the prisoner to follow him. As Earl was able to speak German, the man in his charge understood what was said and obediently, like some great ox, followed the young officer who was much smaller and lighter than his prisoner.

As he came near the place he was seeking where he might turn over the prisoner to the officer who should decide whether he belonged to the prison pen or to the hospital, he came to the place where the aviator was confined. This was the aviator who had flown to the American line in the machine which Leon and Jacques had left behind the German lines.

For some reason which he could not explain at the time, Lieutenant Earl stopped and drew his prisoner face to face with the aviator. Instantly it was evident that they recognized each other, and Earl with great interest listened to the few words that were spoken. There was nothing in their conversation, however, that indicated anything dangerous or that they possessed knowledge of conditions within the American lines.

It was then that Earl turned to the aviator and said, "I must know just where it was that you found the machine in which you came to our lines."

"I will tell you to the best of my ability," said the German. "It was behind some woods not far from the little brook. I think it is about fifteen miles from here. Certainly not more than twenty or twenty-five at the most. I was with some friends when we three discovered the French 'plane. When I found, after a little inspection, that it was in perfect condition it was agreed by us that some one should take the 'plane back and enter the American lines. I was the one chosen for the task. They dressed me in an American

uniform and I took the machine, and here I am."

"And you don't know anything about the men who were in the machine before you took it?"

"Not one thing. We found it just as I am telling you and I came here just as I'm telling you too."

"Can you draw a map showing me about where the machine was when you found it?"

"I think so," answered the German, after a pause of a moment. "I think I can. If you'll give me a piece of paper and a pencil I will draw a map which will show where the stream is and the bridge which was blown up. Then I can show you how far the woods are from the little stream and just where we found the 'plane."

"That's exactly what I want. My brother and a young French soldier were in that 'plane and I want to find out whether they are still behind the German lines or whether they left their machine and got away."

The young lieutenant turned away from the place, having now given his prisoner over to those who knew best what to do with him.

The aid which Jesse Tiger had given the Ger-

man had restored a measure of his strength and he now was in a condition to endure the strain of a short walk.

Earl did not know at the time what disposition was made of the man for his entire thought was given to the problem presented by the aviator who had been caught within the American lines.

Earl was determined to make a search for his missing brother and Jacques. He now had the outlines of a map that might be of great assistance to him in his efforts. He was eager to obtain permission to begin a search in the direction indicated by the German aviator and to do this successfully he must start at once.

Accordingly he decided to seek the colonel of his regiment at once and obtain permission, if possible, for such an attempt to be made by him. In his mind he already had decided that Jesse Tiger should accompany him. Whether or not more would go would depend upon the decision of the colonel.

For some reason which he could not explain, Earl was confident that his brother was somewhere behind the German lines and was not a prisoner in their hands. It would be difficult, if

not impossible, for him to return to his own company, unless help of some kind was given him. This help Lieutenant Earl was determined to give if he could obtain permission from the colonel.

CHAPTER XII

THE MEN IN THE AUTOMOBILE

THE desired permission for Lieutenant Earl to make his apparently foolhardy effort to find his brother was reluctantly granted by his colonel. That officer, however, strongly advised the young lieutenant against making any such attempt, for in spite of the fact that apparently the region directly before them was not heavily guarded by the Germans, nevertheless it was impossible to determine just what the conditions facing them were. There had been so many false alarms and the soldiers of the Allies so often had been tricked that even unoccupied regions were sources of suspicion.

Earl, however, was so eager since his interview with the German aviator to attempt to rescue his brother that he would not listen to any of the warning words which his superior officer gave him. He planned to leave the lines that night soon after

dark, and with him was to go as a scout and faithful friend the young Indian, Jesse Tiger.

Already Earl had talked of his plan with the young red man, and Jesse Tiger eagerly had given his consent to accompany his friend on what was certain to prove to be a desperate adventure.

Food for two days was taken by each of the boys, the amount which every soldier engaging in a similar adventure was supposed to carry with him.

Jesse Tiger still retained the two belts of cartridges which he had obtained for the pistol which had been taken from the German soldier. For some reason he had formed a very strong liking for the weapon which he had secured, and already had been practicing with it in shooting at a target.

Apparently the appeal of an adventure, especially if it had anything to do with scouting, found a quick response from him. Although he was quiet in his manner, nevertheless his dark eyes betrayed the deep feelings in his heart and as for his bravery there was not one man in the company who did not respect the Indian warrior for his fearlessness under fire.

Darkness had fallen over the land when the two young soldiers, with their permits, departed from the American lines. For a brief distance they were convinced that they would be in no special danger, but when they should advance into the debatable land, then without question all the skill which Jesse Tiger possessed as a scout would be required. The stars were shining overhead, although no moon was in the sky. They were soon accustomed to the dimness of the light, and as they proceeded they found slight difficulty in making their way forward. The country over which they were moving was somewhat uneven and was part of a farming region which extended far up the sloping sides of the hills in the distance. Thriving vineyards had provided the chief means of living for the people before the outbreak of the war. Since that time the ground had been plowed by shells more than by any agricultural implements and many of the humble cottages had long since been ruined or deserted by their former occupants.

"We'll stop here a few minutes," suggested Earl, in a low voice, when the two soldiers approached one of these deserted houses.

"Why do you stop?" inquired Jesse Tiger. "Are you tired?"

"No, I'm not tired," replied Lieutenant Earl, "but I'm afraid. I confess I do not like this stillness. You can hear the big guns, but they are a good way from us. Right in front of us there isn't a sign of any danger."

Jesse Tiger did not respond and together the two boys entered the rude little building.

They found nothing within, however, to interest them and after a brief delay they again were standing beneath the open sky.

At frequent intervals they halted to listen for a sound that might indicate the presence of their enemies. The boom of the distant guns, however, still remained the only sound to be heard.

Again the boys pushed forward, and the conviction in Lieutenant Earl's heart became stronger with every passing moment that they were confronting some unknown peril. It was impossible for the Boches to have neglected this region, although it provided no great military defense. Before he had departed from his own trenches he had studied carefully the rude map which had been given him and was convinced that

if they succeeded in making their way eight or ten miles eastward they would strike the little stream over which Leon had destroyed the bridge. That Leon must still be somewhere in the vicinity was Earl's positive opinion. If he had been able to return, doubtless he would have done so long before this time.

Several hours elapsed and still the boys were not molested. Twice they had hidden behind the broken trunks of trees which had been partly demolished in the battle, each time suspecting that they had heard the approach of men who doubtless were enemies. Only once, however, had they seen any men, and then not distinctly. A band of twenty-five or more had been discovered moving slowly across the plain in front of them. Apparently they were not guided by any special purpose and the light was too dim to enable either to discover to which side the moving men belonged. That they were parts of the German forces, however, seemed probable to Earl, because already he and his companion had been compelled to pick their way through some wire entanglements.

At last when it was near midnight the two young soldiers stepped out into an open roadway. They

were surprised when they perceived that the road was still in a good state of preservation in spite of the shelling to which it had been subjected within the past few days.

"Which way shall we go?" whispered Lieutenant Earl, as he glanced up and then down the roadway, which seemed unusually white in the darkness.

"I did not see your map."

"From the map I think we go to our left."

"Then to our left we'll go," said Jesse Tiger.

At once acting upon his suggestion, the young Indian started along the road, and Lieutenant Earl after a momentary hesitation speedily joined him.

They had not advanced very far, however, before they were startled by the sound of an approaching automobile. The machine was moving at such a rapid rate that it was impossible for them to flee, and almost before they were aware of what was occurring the swiftly moving car was almost upon them.

The sight of the two boys instantly caused the two occupants of the automobile to stop while one of them called sharply to them.

"Keep your finger on the trigger," whispered Earl to Jesse Tiger, as he hastily decided that he would meet the men and listen to what they had to say. At the worst there were only two of them and doubtless they were not suspicious that the men whom they had halted had ventured so far from the lines of the Allies. Naturally they would be taken for Germans, and as has been said Earl spoke German fluently and he was hopeful that he might be able to gain some information. Behind it all also was a lurking hope that by taking these two men off their guard he might add them both to the number of prisoners whom the Allies recently had secured.

"You look like Englishmen," said one of the men in the car in excellent English.

"One never can tell in these times," retorted Earl lightly. His grasp upon his pistol tightened as he drew slightly nearer the men, who now still seated in their car were only a few yards distant.

"But you cannot be."

"Why can't we be English?"

"For this reason," explained the German, as he drew a map from his pocket.

It was impossible to discern the lines or mark-

ings on the map, but in his supreme confidence the German, who evidently was a minor officer, had pulled forth the paper to confirm the statement he had made. "On this map," he explained, "it is marked that our men shall arrive at this place at eleven o'clock. Therefore, there must be Germans here."

"There are," said Earl.

"Where?" demanded the officer quickly.

"Right in the automobile."

"Yes, but I do not mean in our car. I mean soldiers of the line—German soldiers."

"If you think we're English, why do you ask us about it? Why don't you take us prisoners with you?"

"I shall do that also," said the German, "but just now I am looking for some of our own men. It is very strange that we should come to the place which was marked on the map and yet not find any of our men here. How do you account for it?"

"The train is late," suggested Earl. "They are behind time."

"But I do not understand it," protested the German officer.

"It must have gotten off the track somewhere."

"We must investigate this, and I will ask both of you to get into the car and go with us. It will be better for us to disarm you before we take you back to camp. When you are there you can tell your own story, but just now I'm somewhat suspicious of you. And I expected to find Germans. I cannot understand the delay."

"I told you," suggested Earl.

"You told me what?"

"I told you the train was late. Do you really want to take away our pistols from us?"

"Yes, I think it is best."

"Will you have them butt end first or do you prefer the muzzle?"

"Of course you will extend them with the handle toward us," said the officer.

"Of course I shall *not,*" said Earl, who now was close to the side of Jesse Tiger. "I shall hand you my pistol just so." As he spoke Lieutenant Earl thrust the muzzle of his weapon directly into the face of the officer, while Jesse Tiger instantly leaped upon the second man and held him as in a vise.

The astonishment of the German officer at being

thus rudely accosted was almost as great as it had been when he discovered that his superiors had failed to fulfill their plans and establish German soldiers at the places which he and his companion had sought in their automobile.

"Get out of the car and walk now," ordered Lieutenant Earl.

The German officer gazed stupidly at him for a moment, but when the order was repeated apparently he understood.

"Where shall I walk?" inquired the soldier.

"You won't have any difficulty in learning where to go. You'll be told just what and when, but get out of the car now," he added, turning to his companion. "Search this man and take away any weapons he may have. Have you anything we could tie him with?"

"I have," answered the young Indian. "I always have."

Deftly Jesse Tiger searched the officer, removing such papers as he found and taking the weapons with which he was equipped.

Meanwhile, the second German was treated in a similar manner and with hands tied behind their backs they both were ordered to start toward the

American lines and not once to look behind them on their way.

"We'll use this car ourselves for a while anyway," explained the young lieutenant to his companion. "I hate to lose those men, but it will be better to let them go than it will be not to take advantage of the car. We don't know where we're going, but I hope we'll get there pretty soon. It may help us to find the bridge we're looking for, and if I can once get Leon, if there's any gasoline left in this machine, there isn't a car this side of the Rhine that can catch us."

CHAPTER XIII

A PASSING AUTOMOBILE

WE must now return to the fortunes of Lieutenant Leon whom we left on the bank of the stream prepared to adopt the means that his unknown girl friend had provided by which he was to cross to the opposite bank. As soon as he comprehended what she had in mind for him, he at once eagerly fell into her plan.

His main anxiety now was to prevent his pistol from becoming wet in the stream. How he was to keep it dry and at the same time cling to the log to which the leashes of the dogs had been fastened was a trying problem.

Without any delay, however, he at once advanced into the stream until the water came above his waist. Then, leaning forward, he grasped the small log with one hand and held the other above his head. A sharp word from the girl on the bank

instantly caused the faithful animals to begin to swim toward the other shore.

Leon looked quickly all about him as the water became deeper, fearful that enemies might appear on the shore. No one, however, was seen, and the impatient animals were swimming swiftly across the water.

"Don't let go!" called the girl, speaking in English.

In spite of the peril of his position, Leon was startled as he heard the girl speaking in his own tongue. And he had believed she was able to converse only in French! There was no time, however, for explanation, and he clung steadily to the protecting log.

The water soon was above his head and he was fully aware of the necessity for him to preserve his strength and at the same time cling to the refuge he had obtained.

Even then there flashed into his mind the thought that the dogs doubtless were accustomed to a task similar to the one in which they were engaged. Apparently they were aware of the duties imposed upon them and had been waiting merely for the word to start. They were power-

ful brutes and made rapid progress. The water was smooth and the sound of an occasional splash alone broke in upon the silence of the morning.

Steadily they drew near the bank they were seeking and in a brief time Lieutenant Leon felt the ground beneath his feet. Standing erect and releasing his grasp on the log, he turned to wave to the girl through whose efforts he was indebted for his passage across the stream. She, however, had disappeared, and though he looked eagerly in all directions he did not obtain a glimpse of her. He heard a faint sound of a whistle in the distance and instantly the dogs obediently prepared to recross the stream. Leon examined the leash to make certain that the animals were not likely to be entangled by it, and then stood motionless on the bank as he watched them recross.

He was reminded, by the sight, of the dogs which he had seen in Holland and Belgium before the outbreak of the Big War. They had many a time taken the place of horses and drawn the market-carts into the cities in the early morning light. He had seen them, too, when they had brought carts filled with the produce of the gardens and while in the market-place their owners

were busily disposing of their wares, the dogs had stretched themselves upon the street and were sleeping in the sunlight. What intelligent animals many of them were! Large and small alike seemed to enter into the scheme of providing for the existence of the families to which they belonged.

Leon watched the two dogs that had conveyed him to the place where he now was standing until they drew near the woods through which he had passed under the guidance of the girl that had aided him. For a moment he was almost persuaded that he had obtained a glimpse of her, but she was not seen again. Convinced at last that she was gone and that his own peril demanded instant activity on his part, he turned to examine the country near by.

Not far from the road stood the ruins of a peasant's house. Instantly he decided to seek refuge in the building, believing that he was not likely to be disturbed and that no one would search for an American soldier in such an abandoned spot.

The bread which had been given him was now soaked, but as soon as the young lieutenant entered the building he at once began to eat the food

which had been provided. He decided that it would be well for him not to try to make his way back to the American lines until the approach of evening.

Meanwhile there was nothing for him to do except to remain in hiding. He looked again at the food which the unknown girl had given him and decided that he would eat no more until afternoon.

Then began a long and tedious waiting which was difficult for the impatient young officer to endure. The strange silence of the region for the most part was unbroken. Just what was the meaning of the quiet of this spot was difficult for him to conjecture. The sound of the great guns in the distance still was continually heard. Doubtless the great struggle was still going on all about him, and yet in this one little spot there apparently was freedom from the bloodshed and strife.

Curiously he watched a couple of little birds that hopped about among the branches of the bushes near the house. The structure itself had been partly destroyed, doubtless by some shell that had fallen near it. If appearances were to be believed then, the walls must have crumbled

many months before this time. There was no evidence of a recent attack to be seen.

A half-hour after Leon had sought his shelter he saw a squad of German soldiers marching down the road. There were fifteen men in the little band and the young American smiled in spite of the peril which threatened him when he saw that they were practicing the goose-step which had made many of the German companies marked. The men apparently had no suspicion that an enemy was near and swiftly passed the house, soon disappearing around the bend in the road.

A little later a larger band approached from the opposite direction. They too did not halt near the house and soon disappeared from sight. Several times during the forenoon Leon saw similar bands passing, but not one of them halted near the place in which he was hiding. Just what the meaning of these strange maneuvers was of course he had no means of knowing. It was evident, however, that the numbers of his enemies were increasing and that before the time should arrive when he planned to renew his flight the entire region might be filled with them.

At noontime the marching soldiers no longer

were to be seen. An hour elapsed and not a soul passed along the lonely road. His waiting was becoming dreary and in spite of the danger that might beset his attempt the young lieutenant was almost tempted to flee from the region.

Wiser counsels, however, prevailed, and after he had eaten a little more of his food he more calmly faced the condition which confronted him.

At that moment Leon's thoughts were swiftly diverted from the monotony of his long waiting. Through the doorway came the sound of a swiftly approaching automobile. There were two occupants in the machine, and the driver was occasionally glancing behind him as if he was fearful of pursuit. Lieutenant Leon somewhat indifferently watched the approaching car. The road over which it must pass was within a few yards of the place where he was standing, and he would be able to see the faces of the swiftly approaching men when they passed.

As the car drew nearer, Leon's attention became fixed upon one of the occupants. Intently he gazed at the man seated in the front of the car. There was something strangely familiar about the figure. A moment later he was almost persuaded

that he saw his brother Earl in the rapidly moving automobile.

Convinced, however, that it was impossible for Earl to be in the vicinity, he was about to turn away impatiently, when again he looked long and earnestly at the car which now was not more than twenty-five yards away. The man looked like Earl. It was Earl, he was well-nigh convinced, and as the car sped past the house he suddenly placed his hands to his lips and sent forth the family whistle.

The shrill note instantly caused the man in the front seat of the car to turn and look hastily behind him. Again Leon emitted the "family call." This time there was no mistaking the actions of the driver. He had recognized the whistle and by that very fact convinced Leon that his brother in some unaccountable way was riding in a car over the road where the German soldiers recently had been marching and countermarching. It was plain that Earl was about to stop the machine and investigate the unexpected sound which had saluted him.

Leon restrained his impulse to dart out of the house and run to meet his brother. His first

thought had been that if Earl was in the automobile there must be a good reason for it, for otherwise he would not have been found on a road that was held, if not occupied by the soldiers of the German army.

At that moment, however, the waiting Leon was startled as he glanced up the road in the direction from which the automobile had come and saw a swiftly moving body of horsemen approaching. In his experiences on the front as yet he had never seen cavalry in action. Reports had come of the work which the horsemen had done in various quarters, but among his own immediate comrades there had been no activities by the cavalry.

Leon, deeply interested, for a moment watched the approaching riders and then as he turned to look once more at the automobile he saw that its occupants had already become aware of the approaching band and that without any further delay they were about to proceed. Indeed, Leon fancied he could hear the low exclamation of the two men as they instantly prepared to resume their flight. A moment later the car was moving swiftly over the road and in a brief time disappeared around the bend.

CHAPTER XIV

EARL'S RETURN

SPEECHLESS in his amazement, Leon stood for a moment and watched the car until it no longer could be seen. And his own brother was riding away in it. The strangeness of the sight and yet the undoubted fact that Earl was indeed in the disappearing automobile served to increase the mystery which surrounded him.

Soon after the car disappeared, Leon, still more uneasy and mystified by the strange event, resumed his former place in the ruined house.

The task for which he had been sent had now been accomplished. The peril which surrounded him was great and apparently was steadily increasing, although there had been a lull in the coming of the troops which had been passing the place. Of course there was uncertainty about his own lines which by this time might have been

moved forward or been driven back since his departure.

An almost uncontrollable longing to go back among his friends swept over the heart of the young officer. Acting upon the impulse of the moment, he was almost ready to make the attempt and flee. Across the field that once had been plowed but now had been torn by shot and shell, he would have difficulty in making his way toward his own lines. But there was no other way by which he could return, and although he was uncertain as to the distance which must be covered he was eager to begin the attempt. Even the danger appeared to be less threatening as he thought of the welcome he would receive when he was once more in his own company.

He was so strongly under the influence of this feeling that he was about to make the attempt at once when he was startled by the sound of some one approaching the building. Peering from the corner of the open window, he saw a man on horseback riding up to the house. He obtained also a momentary glimpse of the band which he and Earl had discovered at the same moment and that had caused the latter to flee in his automobile. The

approaching man, however, was alone and apparently was free from any fear of enemies lurking in the vicinity.

There soon was no question in the young lieutenant's mind that the man was preparing to come directly to the house. Whether or not he was suspicious of any one having found refuge within it was not clear.

Convinced, however, that his own peril was great, Leon's fears increased when he discovered that the approaching man was a German officer. As far as he was able to judge, Leon concluded the man was a colonel. Doubtless he had been in command of the troops which had now disappeared from sight around the bend in the road over which Earl and his companion had fled.

What was there for him to do? Instantly concluding that there was only one course to be followed, Leon looked hastily about him for a hiding-place. If the officer was not looking for him, he might be safe. There was no time for observation, and instantly the young American darted behind the mass of the fallen partitions which at one time had separated the two rooms on the first floor of the rude little building.

From his hiding-place Leon still was able to see much that might be done in the room he had abandoned. His excitement increased when a moment later the officer entered and Leon was enabled to confirm his first impression. The man was a colonel in the German army.

Through the open doorway Leon saw that his horse had been left outside and was standing within a few yards of the entrance.

With deep interest Leon watched the officer as he seated himself upon the floor with his back against the wall and taking his pipe from his pocket began to smoke. An expression of contentment appeared upon the face of the German, and it was evident that he was not suspicious of the presence in the building of any one who was hostile to him.

Suddenly it occurred to Leon that the man might be waiting for the coming of some one, or that he was resting while his men followed the disappearing automobile.

In either event it was possible that the number of his enemies might be greatly increased, and Leon decided that he must act immediately.

His clothing still was wet from his crossing of

the river, but he had kept his pistol dry and as he drew it he examined it carefully to see that it was in good working order.

Holding his weapon in his hand, Leon looked again at the officer whose contentment apparently increased with every puff of smoke that he emitted. It was evident that he was not supicious, and his resting spell was one which he greatly enjoyed.

Suddenly Leon leaped forward. He dashed over the débris, holding his pistol in his extended right hand, and in a low voice called to his enemy, "Surrender."

Under other circumstances the expression which appeared upon the phlegmatic face of the stout German colonel would have caused Leon to laugh heartily. As it was, the officer gazed stupidly for a moment at the young American and neither moved nor spoke.

"Surrender!" again called Leon. "Don't you understand the English language?"

Calmly and deliberately, as if he was replenishing his pipe, the German reached toward his pocket.

"None of that!" called Leon sharply. "Don't

you try any of your Hun tricks on me! Put up your hands and put them up mighty quick!"

Leon was still in doubt as to whether or not the German understood the words he had heard. There was no misunderstanding, however, the motions of the tense young lieutenant, who indicated by lifting both his hands for a moment, what his prisoner was to do. And the colonel did it. There was a new expression now in his eyes and one that indicated his understanding of the temper of the young American confronting him.

Besides, Leon's pistol had a language all its own and as the weapon was held directly in front of the face of the man, who was still seated upon the floor, the colonel decided that it was wise for him to give heed to the demand.

"I want you to stand up," called Leon.

As the officer, however, did not obey, Leon indicated by a motion of his left hand that the man was to rise.

Slowly and with apparent difficulty the German colonel rose to his feet.

"Don't you understand any English?" demanded Leon.

The German had not once spoken since the

startling interview had begun. Even now he still stolidly gazed at the young American lieutenant, although as has been said there was a new glitter in his eyes. Leon was fully aware of the danger which confronted him, and although he was very quiet in his manner, he nevertheless was determined that his prisoner should not obtain any advantage over him.

He was surprised when the German made a few guttural sounds that were meaningless to Lieutenant Leon.

"I don't understand you," said Leon quietly, "and if you don't know any English, we aren't likely to have a very extended conversation. What I propose is that I shall take your horse and that you shall go directly ahead of me. I do not know just how far away the American lines are, but we'll try to find them if we have to march straight to Halifax." Motioning with his pistol for his prisoner to take from his pockets anything which they held, the colonel at first hesitated, and then as he glanced again at the stern face of the intrepid young officer he slowly drew from one pocket after another the articles which they held.

Leon still was suspicious when the task had been

completed that the prisoner might have concealed weapons about him. He glanced hastily about the room, hoping that he might discover a rope or strap of some kind by which he might bind the hands of his prisoner. There was, however, nothing to be seen. It was scarcely feasible for him to complete the search himself, and after a brief moment of hesitation he motioned for the colonel to precede him through the open doorway and then directed him to take his place in front of the horse.

Lightly Leon leaped into the saddle. He was prepared for any sudden action on the part of the German, but the man stood passively before him, making no protest and apparently unable to defend himself.

It was a picture which Leon never forgot, although he was able to see only a part of it. The young American lieutenant mounted upon a horse, holding the bridle rein in his left hand and with his pistol covering the motionless prisoner, provided a strange contrast to the ruins of the little house from which they both a moment before had emerged.

There was no time, however, to be lost in rev-

eries or in picturing to himself the effect which such a scene might make upon Earl if he was only present to behold it.

A sharp interruption came at that moment when the sound of a swiftly approaching automobile was heard.

The car was coming from the direction in which Earl had disappeared, and though he had slight hope of his brother's return at that time, Leon gazed with intense interest at the swiftly moving machine.

Only a few minutes elapsed before it was drawing near the house. If, as was doubtless the case, the car contained Germans, then Leon was well aware that his peril was great. And yet in spite of his danger so fascinated was he by the sight that he still delayed, staring until he could discover whether it was friend or enemy approaching.

The German colonel also was watching the swiftly moving automobile. There was nothing in his manner to indicate either hope or fear. Apparently he had ignored the presence of the young lieutenant.

Leon's heart was beating high when a moment

later he was convinced that it was indeed his brother returning in the same automobile in which he had fled. How he had contrived to evade the band of German soldiers which had followed him, Leon was unable to conjecture. It was sufficient, however, that he was near and the young lieutenant eagerly waited for him to approach.

At that moment the strange sight of the mounted lieutenant with his German prisoner standing before him was seen by Earl. He gave one shrill whistle through his hands and then as the car was abruptly halted in the road directly in front of the abandoned house, Earl leaped from his seat and ran swiftly toward his brother.

CHAPTER XV

LEON STARTS

FOR a moment Leon stared at the approaching soldier as if it still was impossible for him to believe that his own brother had discovered the place where he was waiting. He was fearful if he neglected his prisoner that the German colonel might endeavor to escape, in spite of the fact that he had two Americans now to face instead of one.

"Where did you come from, Leon?" demanded Earl, "and what are you doing here?"

"Just now I'm sitting in the saddle and ready to start back to our lines with this German colonel."

"But where did you get him?"

"Why, he came to call on me; he was so fascinated that he was unable to leave. Indeed, I have taken quite a liking to him myself and have become so fond of him that I cannot bear to have him out of my sight."

"Stop your joking. This is too serious for you to be laughing in such a place as we are. Nobody knows how many Boches may be between us and our lines."

"By the way, Earl," inquired Leon quietly, "where did you get that automobile? It looks like a good car, and I think it is French."

"Your thinking is all right. It is a French car and we can make sixty-five or seventy miles an hour. We did just a little while ago."

"That's all right. We may want to make better time than that before we get back with our men again. But where did you get the car?"

"I haven't time to tell you very much about it except that we found a couple of Germans in the car and we suggested that they should start toward the American lines. They didn't seem to know just where they were going, but they started all right. We had driven them out of the car, you see, and Jesse and I decided that we could use it to better advantage than they could. You know we were looking for you."

"Well, you have found me," said Leon dryly. "Now, what next?"

"You had better come with us."

"What, and leave my friend here?" retorted Leon, as he glanced again at the stolid German, who in spite of his manner was listening intently to the conversation of the twin boys.

"You can bring him with us."

"But I don't want to give up my pony," retorted Leon, as he patted the beautiful animal on which he was seated.

Almost as if he understood, the spirited horse threw his head high into the air, pawed the earth two or three times as if he was endeavoring to show that his spirits were equally high and he was proud of the favor which he had found in the eyes of the young American lieutenant.

"No, I'll tell you what we'll do," continued Leon. "You go on with your car and I will cut across lots with my colonel. I'll make him walk and I will ride behind to see that no accident happens to him."

"Do you know where you are?"

"Nothing, except that I am where I do not want to be. I wish I was back with my company, but as I do not know of any way of getting there except by starting, I think I had better begin my journey.

It will be night before long, anyway," added Leon, as he glanced at the sun which now was low in the western sky.

"It's the strangest thing I ever heard," suggested Earl thoughtfully. "Here we are picking up horses, automobiles and occasional prisoners and yet there doesn't seem to be any fighting going on here. I'm almost afraid that we are a good deal farther behind the German lines than we have thought we were."

"Every foot will take us nearer our lines, and I think we had better start. I would go with you, Earl, if it wasn't for this horse. We'll take our chances with the prisoner, all right, but I do want to keep this animal, if I can. You can't drive your car across the country, or in No Man's Land, so I think your best plan will be to try to go back the way you came."

"I don't care how I get back if I can only get there, but it's time for us to start and we'll try it that way."

As he spoke, Earl ran quickly back to the car in which Jesse Tiger had remained seated during the interview. In a moment they were speeding

up the road, moving so rapidly that when Leon decided that he would start they were almost beyond his vision.

"Come along, my friend," suggested Leon sharply to his prisoner. "It's time we were moving. You're the infantry on this march and I'm the cavalry. Now, look out that you don't get run down. Remember that you have enemies in front of you, enemies behind you, and you'll get caught between the two if you don't look sharp and obey orders."

The expression on the face of the stolid German was unchanged, but it was evident that he understood the directions of the young lieutenant. Once more he looked about him, as if he were hopeful of finding help in some unexpected quarter, but as no aid was promised he at last reluctantly obeyed and started in the direction indicated by his captor.

Leon was far from being elated now. His sudden possession of the German colonel for a moment had seemed almost incredible, but now that the man was in his power and he saw him advancing before him, the peril of his own situation came back to him with renewed force.

He was, as his brother had suggested, at some unknown distance from his own lines. What lay between him and the place he was seeking was also unknown. In a general way he was aware of the direction in which he must move and was hopeful that the approaching dusk of the evening might protect him from unexpected attacks. At all events, there was nothing now to be done except to push forward and hope for a successful outcome of his desperate venture.

Leon was aware of the change which had come in the expression of the colonel. Hatred, chagrin, cunning were all combined, but it was equally manifest that behind all these feelings was one greater than all and that was his fear that the young lieutenant would do exactly what he had said he would do if any attempt to escape was made.

Leon's fears increased as he and his prisoner moved steadily forward. And yet he must go on. Frequently he glanced behind him and then peered intently before, to discover whether or not any enemies were within sight. He wished heartily that his friend Jacques was with him. There was always for Leon a certain calm that came from the presence of the cool young Frenchman.

Jacques was almost unique among all of Leon's acquaintances. Daring, abounding in resources, quick of action, always resourceful, there still was combined with these qualities a self-control and calmness that were exceedingly helpful to the impulsive young lieutenant.

As the advance continued, Leon was convinced that he was nearer his own lines than at first he had thought. Indications that recent fighting had occurred were increasing in evidence. Several times in the dim light he saw what he believed to be bodies of unburied men, who perhaps had been abandoned in the flight which had followed the battle. Trees, torn from their roots or with trunks broken as if they had been sawn asunder, were lying on the ground, and it was difficult for him at times to distinguish between them and the bodies of fallen soldiers. The western sky was aglow with a deep red which was a fitting frame for the picture which now presented itself.

Somehow, in spite of his elation over his successful taking of a prominent German officer, Leon's spirits for a moment sank. Indeed, there came to him a vision of his home far across the Atlantic. It had been three years since he had

seen any member of his family except his twin brother. Doubtless his father and mother had changed much in that time and their anxiety for the absent boys had aged them both. And what a heavy burden it was they were carrying!

Arousing himself from this depressing reverie, Leon once more looked keenly at his prisoner, to make sure that the man was still obedient and then urged him to increase the speed at which he was moving.

"My great and glorious friend," he said lightly, "in the course of human events it becomes necessary for us to pick up and dust so to speak. In other words we must vamoose. That is to say there may be obstacles of which we have no conception that may prevent our meritorious advance. There may also be certain inexplicable problems which must be solved by us ere we are safe within the confines of the most gallant army on earth. You understand me, I take it?"

The prisoner had stopped as Leon began to address him and now was staring blankly at the young lieutenant as if he was doing his utmost to take in what had been said.

"All I mean is," said Leon speaking more

lightly than his true feelings warranted, "you have got to get a move on you. You understand that don't you?"

"But I am moving," explained the colonel speaking in English greatly to the surprise of his captor.

"You are, my friend, but you are not moving with the velocity which is more becoming in a man who is to be welcomed by his friends. I suggest, therefore, that you lift your pedal extremities with greater rapidity and that less seldom you cast your glance upon me. To tell you the truth, I have troubles enough of my own. I want to keep you out of difficulty and I want to save this horse from being shot. In view of these two facts my own life is a matter worthy of quite considerable grave consideration by the undersigned and it is therefore and consequently that I am saying to you, move on. Advance faster, be a little more precipitate in your movements. Do not linger long by the wayside."

The German shook his head as if he was unable to comprehend the language in which the strange young American was speaking. At last he remarked soberly, "I am your prisoner and must do

what you say, but I confess to you I do not understand."

"I do not blame you a little bit. To speak plainly what I want is for you to move faster."

"But I am moving fast."

Leon scowled as he replied, "You have been doing quite well, but what I want you to do now is to move still faster."

The German colonel had stopped, hoping that a brief period of rest might be given him, but there were reasons why his young captor was eager to proceed rapidly and consequently his appealing glance found no response.

"I shall not repeat," said Leon in a low voice. "I want you to go faster."

There was something in the tone of the voice of the speaker that convinced the prisoner that his words must be heeded.

Groaning audibly he began to run and the little procession moved more rapidly over the rough and uneven earth.

Not far before him Leon saw a wood or part of a forest, he was unable to determine which. It was well known among the Americans that these forests provided the greatest of all danger spots

at the front. Even the great leader, Napoleon did not attempt to drive his enemies from certain forests in Northern France, but had done his utmost to encircle the places. And now as Leon was approaching one of these well known danger spots, he was aware that not only he, but his prisoner also was greatly interested in the developments that might there take place.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COLONEL'S FLIGHT

THE light was still sufficient to enable Leon to see quite distinctly the various objects near him. He was unable to recognize any familiar places in the landscape and was still in doubt as to the direction he ought to follow. Thus far his German prisoner had not given him any serious trouble. As docile as some great ox, the man had obeyed his orders and had not manifested any intention to fight for his liberty. Leon, however, was distrustful of him and still intently watched his every movement.

At that time the young lieutenant's attention was drawn to a wall which apparently was all that remained of what once had been a dwelling house. On this wall was a swallow's nest and the mother bird was busily feeding her young. Even the nest itself was an object of interest and Leon marveled at the fearlessness of these little creatures that

still clung to their homes in the midst of the shelled-marked region. Along the borders of the woods were many fallen trees. Some of these had been broken as if by a heavy blow and others even presented the appearance of having been cut cleanly through the trunks. In places the ground was covered with these ruins of the forests, although Leon's horse was still able to pick his way through them. Difficult as the country was through which he was moving Leon nevertheless steadily advanced.

Suddenly from out of the woods a band of men appeared, who swiftly ran to meet him. As they came nearer Leon recognized them as Morroccan troops. Their eyes seemed in the dim light almost to be flashing.

For a moment he halted and endeavored to enter into conversation with these strange men. They were, however, unable to converse with him and as soon as they were convinced that he was one of the army with which they themselves were fighting their hesitancy disappeared. Turning back they retraced their way into the forest and soon were lost to sight.

Still Leon was moving forward in the direction in which he believed he must move if he was once more to find his friends. Suddenly his horse snorted and shied to one side. The unexpected movement, however, did not find Leon unprepared and as he hastily drew rein on his snorting horse he suddenly saw seated on the ground a man evidently wounded. This man was leaning back against the trunk of a fallen tree and from his appearance Leon at once concluded that he had been badly wounded.

"You stay right where you are," he ordered his prisoner as he leaped from the back of his horse and approached the suffering soldier who was only a few feet distant.

As Leon drew near he abruptly stopped and stared wildly at the man. It was Jacques whom he saw before him. His friend, however, apparently did not recognize him and it was equally evident that he was suffering intensely.

"Jacques, Jacques, don't you know me?" called Leon as he leaned toward his friend.

The face of Jacques, for it was indeed he, was ghastly as he slowly turned to gaze at the in-

quirer. A faint trace of a smile appeared and it was quickly manifest that he had recognized the young lieutenant.

"Where are you hurt?" inquired Leon anxiously.

There was no time for questions as to the manner in which the young French soldier had met with his misfortune and the chief thought in Leon's mind was to do all in his power to aid.

A hasty examination revealed the fact that Jacques had been severely wounded in his back. This was not uncommon in spite of the bravery of the soldiers. Frequently a shell burst over their heads or behind them and the scattering missiles were quite likely to inflict wounds in the back of the fighting soldier. Indeed, in spite of his excitement, Leon with a smile recalled a letter which one of his company had written home. He had been bidden by his sister to go if he must, but to be sure if he was wounded that the wounds were not in his back. The first letter the wounded soldier had written had explained that he had received quite a severe wound and that it was in his back. He then quaintly described how the shell had whistled over him and when it struck

had scattered its missiles in such a way that several of the men, whose faces were turned toward their enemies at the time, had received several wounds in their backs.

Fortunately Leon had with him in his kit his first aid utensils. Quickly applying these he did his utmost to relieve his friend whose wound was still bleeding freely.

He had called to the German colonel to assist him, but the aid rendered by the prisoner was clumsily given and Leon soon learned that what he wanted done he must himself do.

At last when he had completed his task he said quietly, "Jacques, I must put you on the back of this horse."

"I cannot sit up," explained Jacques feebly.

"Then you may lie down, but on the back of that horse you're going just as sure as my name is Leon."

There was nothing to be said against such positive demands and feebly Jacques tried to rise.

Again turning to the German prisoner Leon said quickly, "Help me put him on the back of the horse."

Together the two men lifted the wounded young

Frenchman and placed him in the saddle. It was evident, however, that he would be able to retain his seat only with great difficulty. For a time Leon decided that he would sit behind his friend and try to hold him in his place. How long the horse would be able to carry double was also a question in his mind, for which he found no immediate answer The spirited animal was already tired, plainly having been driven furiously before the German colonel had stopped at the little house in which Leon was hiding.

Directing the prisoner to take his place in front, Leon, seated behind Jacques, held to his friend with one arm while with his other hand he grasped his pistol and also tried to hold the reins.

For a brief distance the little procession moved forward, and then a sudden break came when as they drew somewhat nearer the border of the woods which they were passing the German colonel suddenly began to run.

"Stop! Halt, or I shall shoot!" called Leon loudly.

The prisoner, however, did not heed the warning call, but instead increased the speed at which he was running.

"Hang on, Jacques," whispered Leon. "Hang on until I come back. I'm going to get that fellow. He mustn't think he can leave us in this way."

Still holding his pistol, Leon leaped to the ground and swiftly followed the running German. In a brief time he was aware that he was gaining rapidly upon the man and as he drew nearer he called again, "Stop! Halt where you are!"

The German, however, still gave no heed to the call. Indeed, it seemed as if his speed increased. He was, however, as has been said, large and somewhat ponderous and Leon was convinced that his wind soon would fail him. He pursued the fleeing German a little further and then once more called to him. He was now not more than three yards behind the colonel and was fully aware that he would certainly overtake him speedily.

He was, however, intensely desirous of taking the man uninjured. The picture which had presented itself to him of his return to his own lines driving a German colonel before him as a prisoner was one which he did not wish to lose.

Abruptly increasing the pace at which he was running he gained rapidly upon the man and in a

moment threw himself upon his back, striving to encircle his head with his arms and at the same time to cause the man to fall by working his knees into the small of his back.

Together the two men fell to the ground and a struggle instantly followed. The German was powerful, but he was at least fifteen years older than his young antagonist. Leon soon was aware of the strength which the man possessed, for he was held almost as in the grip of a vise. One arm of the German had been thrown around him and with his other arm he was striving to seize Leon by his neck.

The young lieutenant was doing his utmost to prevent the German from succeeding in his attempt. He was confident that if the struggle could be prolonged the victory certainly would be his. Like the German army which depended for its success upon a huge initial rush in masses, the colonel was exhausting all his strength at the beginning of the contest.

Difficult as his position was, Leon's confidence increased when after a tense struggle, which lasted several minutes, he discovered that the strength of his antagonist was surely becoming less.

Still confining his efforts to preventing the German from seizing his neck, Leon exerted all his strength and held on. It was not long, however, before he found that the moment for which he had been waiting had arrived. Abruptly he turned and twisted in the grasp of the man and soon found that he had freed himself. Then once more drawing his pistol he said in a low voice, "Now will you give up or shall I shoot you?"

"Kamerad, kamerad," cried the German promptly, indicating his desire to surrender.

"That's all right," said Leon breathlessly. "Come back with me."

The colonel was obedient now and meekly did as he had been bidden. Together they returned to the spot where Jacques and the horse had been left, but as they drew near the place Leon was startled when he became aware that neither Jacques nor the horse was to be seen.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PASSING CAR

AS soon as Leon was convinced that Jacques had indeed disappeared, his first thought turned instantly toward the prisoner he had taken. Apparently the colonel was not disturbed, even if he was aware of the disappearance of the wounded young Frenchman. His manner was still the same stolid, indifferent one which it had been from the first. The young lieutenant, however, was steadily on his guard, determined that if the worst he feared should come to pass, the last man upon whom he would look would be the German colonel.

The light was dim now but it still was sufficiently clear to enable Leon to scan the immediate region. He decided to make sure that his friend really was gone before he himself resumed his march.

Keenly he glanced again all about him. There

was something almost uncanny in the silence which rested over the region. Not a sound came from the woods and the roar of the distant guns was now dull and heavy.

He did not dare call aloud, because in spite of the apparent desertion of the region he was fearful that his enemies were hidden behind the trees and perhaps were not unaware of his actions at that very moment.

The mystery of the disappearance of Jacques had not been solved. It is true he might have been carried away by the horse, but the young aviator was in such a weakened condition that Leon was fearful he would not long be able to retain his seat.

Again he looked and listened for the sound of the footfalls of the horse upon which Jacques had been riding. Leon's first thought had been that the animal had been frightened by some unexpected sound and had fled from the region, leaving the suffering young Frenchman on the ground. He was well aware that Jacques was suffering keenly. Indeed, Leon was fearful that Jacques had received his last wound.

Only a half-hour had elapsed, however, and

Leon decided that he could remain no longer. The stern necessity of returning to his own lines and his fear that the prisoner he had secured might escape, both influenced him strongly.

In a low voice he turned to the German colonel and said, "Do you know how far our lines are from this place?"

"I do not. They change."

"They are moving some, that is true," acknowledged Leon, "but they are going only in one direction."

"What is that?"

"Straight ahead."

"But we are retreating according to our plan," protested the prisoner.

"Then all I can say is that your plan has been working mighty well and mighty fast. Just now I want to know where we are."

"But I cannot tell you," protested the German. "I'm a stranger in this region, just as you Americans are."

"Do you know in which direction your own lines are?"

"I think they are over yonder," answered the colonel, as he pointed to his right.

"You know better than that," said Leon. "They are not in that direction. Let me tell you something—if anything happens that we are caught by the Germans there will be only one of us they will get."

"Which one is that?"

"It won't be you."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm close behind you and I still have my pistol. The first German I shall shoot will be you."

"But that is not what I want."

"I'm a little surprised at that. Do you mean to tell me that you do not enjoy being shot at by a young American lieutenant?"

"Indeed I do not. I do not wish to be shot at all."

"Your only hope of not having that agreeable experience will be in our getting safely back within the American lines. If the Germans come near us or try to retake us they will get me, as I told you, but they will never lay hands on you."

There was a brief moment of silence and it was plain to the young lieutenant that his prisoner had been impressed by the words he had heard. Leon

also was strongly suspicious that the German knew more than he had acknowledged of the geography of the region. Indeed, Leon, as has been said, was fearful that the man was doing his utmost to confuse him in his directions and was trying to lead him back within the lines of his friends.

And there was danger of Leon's gaining that distinction without any assistance by the man whom he had captured. That German lines might be before him he was well aware. How he was to pass them he did not know. There was no alternative, however, except to advance, and in his eagerness Leon at once resumed his attempt.

Cautiously and carefully he picked his way along the border of the woods. All the time he insisted that the German colonel should precede him, the distance between them never varying much over a yard.

They had skirted the woods for about ten minutes when Leon was startled as he heard the report of a rifle not far away and then heard the thud of the bullet as it struck a tree near which he was moving at the time.

Startling as the report was, the effect upon the

prisoner was more marked than upon the young lieutenant. Instantly the German broke into a flight, starting swiftly in the direction from which the sound of the shot had been heard.

"Come back here!" called Leon, in a low, tense voice. "You'll be between the two fires, for I shall fire if you don't do what I tell you."

The colonel halted abruptly, and after a moment of confusion evidently decided that the lesser of his two evils would be to obey the directions of his young captor. Perhaps also he was not unmindful of the fact that if he should run toward the woods he might be mistaken by his comrades for an enemy and be fired upon by some of the snipers or sharpshooters who doubtless were concealed among the branches of the high trees.

As soon as Leon was sure that his prisoner once more was with him, he instantly ordered him to run in the direction which he indicated while he followed closely at his heels.

Several times the stout colonel stumbled and fell when his feet were caught by projecting roots or by a branch of an overturned tree. It was difficult moving, but the young officer was insistent and although his prisoner soon was showing dis-

tress, Leon had no mercy. He was determined, as he had said, to retain until the very last moment the man whom he had captured. He would also use him as a partial protection, but as for permitting him to escape that thought did not for a moment find a lodging place in Leon's mind.

The peril from the unknown sharpshooter was still strong upon the colonel, and with this was also the additional knowledge that directly behind him was a young American who had threatened to shoot if he attempted to disobey orders. The progress naturally was rapid.

Twice Leon halted to enable the stout colonel to regain his breath. He was groaning and complaining bitterly of the pain in his side, but somehow Leon's feeling of sympathy at this time was not much in evidence. As soon as the colonel had recovered to a degree, Leon promptly ordered him to resume his flight.

It was not long before other shots were fired at the two men. Leon was at a loss to understand their meaning. If he was behind the German lines, as he believed himself to be, then the sight of men moving across the open field or near the borders of the woods naturally would lead the

German sharpshooters to believe they were soldiers of their own army. Why then they should fire upon them was not clear in Leon's thoughts.

Each shot, however, served to renew in a measure the eagerness of the prisoner to depart from that immediate vicinity. Puffing and blowing so noisily that Leon literally was fearful he might betray their presence, the man still struggled and stumbled forward. The stops, however, became more frequent as the distress of the failing colonel became more manifest.

The moments of relief, however, were brief, but as the shots increased in number Leon soon decided that it would be unwise for him to continue his flight for a time. Ordering the colonel to precede him, Leon turned abruptly to his left, determined to find some place, if possible, where he might find a refuge until the night had passed. He was equally determined, however, not to let his prisoner go, and grasped him by his arm as he turned in the direction of the woods.

Together the two men safely gained the border they were seeking and crouching on the ground behind one of the larger trees that still were standing, Leon forced his prisoner to lie prostrate while

he seated himself with his back against the trunk and prepared for the night to pass.

Never before had time moved so slowly for the eager young American. He was listening intently for sounds that might indicate the approach of his enemies and at the same time was watchful of the prisoner whom he was still unwilling to let go. Perhaps his own safety might be increased if he could go forward alone, but he was still unwilling to lose the man whom he had captured.

The sounds of the distant cannon increased as the first faint streak of the dawn appeared. Leon listened intently, trying to gain a fresh indication of the direction in which the advance lines might be, as indicated by the reports of the guns. He still was somewhat confused, when at last he decided that the time had arrived for him to resume his flight.

Without speaking to the colonel, he indicated by a motion of the hand which held the pistol that they were now to renew their attempts to gain the American lines.

It was evident the German was not enthusiastic over the prospect. He was sore in every muscle and had not yet recovered from the violence of

his former exertions. Leon, however, was determined that there should be no delay, and as a consequence the flight speedily was resumed.

The young lieutenant was greatly elated when, after a half-hour had elapsed, he discovered that apparently he was no longer the target for the German sharpshooters concealed among the branches of the tall trees. Not a shot had been fired since he had resumed his activities.

The light was becoming clearer now, and he found himself moving forward over the road which still apparently was in good repair. The progress became more rapid, although Leon permitted his prisoner to share with him some of the crumbs which still remained in his pocket. The food which his girl friend had provided was consumed when this early repast on the crumbs was completed. There had been no delay, however, and they ate as they moved forward.

The light now enabled Leon to see a considerable distance before and behind him. He was startled when he heard the noise of an approaching automobile. He withdrew with his prisoner behind some of the low trees and waited for the machine to pass.

Again he was greatly astonished when he saw seated in the car both his brother Earl and Jesse Tiger.

Startled by the unexpected sight, Leon, unmindful of his own peril, called sharply, "Earl! Earl!"

Either the noise of the moving car or Earl's eagerness to depart from the region was overwhelming. At all events, no heed was given the hail, and although Leon whistled several times the car did not stop.

Suddenly the automobile disappeared from sight. It was almost as if the earth had opened and swallowed it. What the meaning of this strange sight was Leon could not understand. There was no disguising the fact, however, and in his eagerness, still retaining his prisoner, he moved rapidly forward in the direction of the place where the car had so mysteriously and abruptly disappeared from sight.

CHAPTER XVIII

ANOTHER CAR

WHEN Earl and Jesse Tiger had first secured the automobile in which they had dashed forward there was little thought in the mind of either as to just what they would do. Somehow there was a vague hope in the mind of Earl that he might obtain some trace of his brother. This feeling, however, was vague and indefinite. He had already learned that the Germans, for some reason which he did not understand, were not assembled in large numbers in the immediate vicinity and yet he was positive that it was to this part of the country that Leon and Jacques had come. He had found no trace of any mishap and had not talked with any one to learn whether or not any reports of American aviators having been captured were prevalent.

The original occupants of the car had been got-

ten rid of, as we know, and free from the presence of their enemies, Earl and Jesse Tiger drove swiftly ahead.

"What shall we do if we meet some Germans?" inquired Jesse Tiger, who was seated in the front of the car beside Earl, who was driving.

"I am afraid we can make no plans. We shall have to decide what we'll do when we meet them. If it is only a small band, we'll try to throw it off. Of course if there's a body of troops the only thing we can do is to turn back or else ditch the car and then cut and run."

The peril of the ride they were taking was fully understood by Lieutenant Earl. Although he had spoken lightly to his companion of what they might do in case they met numbers of their enemies, Earl nevertheless was well aware how futile his attempts to escape were likely to prove.

In silence Earl drove the car for a time, looking keenly about him and bidding Jesse Tiger watch especially for the approach of any party from behind them. They had not gone far, however, before suddenly Earl discovered a party of four men. They were not far in advance and evidently were approaching. It was plain too that they

were soldiers, for the grey-green uniforms were distinctly seen.

Turning to his companion, Earl said in a low voice, "There are four men coming and they are all soldiers. Don't say anything, but do just as I do."

When the car approached within a hundred yards of the party which had been discovered, Earl stepped quickly out of the machine and bidding Jesse Tiger follow him, they both crawled under the automobile. The hope in Earl's heart was that there would be no halting by the approaching men, who naturally would conclude that there had been trouble with the machine and the occupants were compelled to stop in order to repair it.

Earl hammered noisily, and as he saw the men were only a few yards away the noise he was making increased. He was intensely anxious now, for an investigation by the Germans would prove to them that the men beneath the car were enemies, and there would be slight opportunity for them to defend themselves.

Earl's hopefulness almost failed when he saw that the men stopped when they had drawn near

the place where the automobile was resting beside the road. One of the strangers in a cheery voice inquired if the men beneath the car were in need of any help.

"Nein!" replied Earl savagely, as if he resented the question. As we know, Earl was well trained in German and able to speak the language fluently.

The Germans laughed at the surly reply and at once resumed their march. Earl maintained the noisy hammering in which he had been engaged until the men had gone far down the road.

"That was a close call," he said in a low voice to his companion.

"Yes," answered Jesse Tiger. "I thought they would help us. If they had, they would have taken us both."

"Well, the comfort is that they didn't find us and that we're still here. I don't know but that we're just as well off here as we would be anywhere, but I think the best thing for us to do is to go ahead."

"Do you know where you are going?"

"No, I haven't any idea; but I want to get there just as soon as I can."

Without another word the two young soldiers resumed their places in the front seat of the car, and soon were once more speeding over the road.

Suddenly Jesse Tiger said, "There's a car coming behind us."

"There's only one thing for us to do then. We don't know what the car is, but we must take some chances. If we stay here there won't be any chance at all for us. Is it coming fast?"

"Not very."

"I don't know anything about how well this car is fitted for a run, but we'll have to take some chances, anyway, and I think we'll take that."

Quickly Earl was sending his car swiftly over the smooth road. Occasionally he glanced behind him and was convinced that he was outdistancing the car in his rear. It was perilous work and almost foolhardy, as the young lieutenant well knew, but so many times in his young life he had found that by taking some chances he had accomplished more than he hoped, that now he was determined to push on in their adventure until something definite occurred.

It was soon manifest that Earl and his compan-

ion were rapidly drawing away from the car that was following.

When at last it was evident that there was no immediate danger of their being overtaken, Earl said, "We have had two narrow escapes. I wonder if these things go in threes.. If they do, we must be on the lookout for another one."

"The third strike is out, you know," suggested Jesse Tiger.

"It hasn't been called on us yet, anyway, and we'll keep going until we have to stop."

It was not long after this when Earl was startled by the unexpected call which came from the little abandoned house by the roadside.

As we already know, he had heeded the call which had been followed by the familiar whistle, and was not only amazed but delighted when he discovered his missing brother, Leon.

Of the events which occurred at the little house also we already know, but at the end of the brief interview Earl and Jesse Tiger once more were in flight.

It was a source of comfort to Lieutenant Earl to know that his brother thus far at least was safe. He had had no opportunity to talk with

him concerning the details of the expedition upon which he and Jacques had entered. Jacques himself had not been seen, but Earl was confident that the young Frenchman was able to take care of himself, if the odds were not overwhelmingly against him. The mystery of the prisoner Leon had taken was almost baffling. What was the daring young lieutenant doing with a horse and a German colonel? How had he secured them and would he be able to return to the American lines with both of them?

Fortunately for Earl and his companion, no further interruptions occurred as they sped down the road.

At last when the growing dusk gave evidence that the night was at hand, the young lieutenant was undecided as to what plan was best for them to follow. Should they keep on in the dusk, or hide until the morning light returned?

"Our plan," said Jesse Tiger positively, "is to find some place into which we can run our automobile and then wait there until it is almost morning."

The suggestion of the young Indian was adopted, and Earl decided to find some place, if

possible, where they and the car might remain through the hours of the oncoming night.

It was only in a general way that he was aware of the direction he must follow in order to return to the American lines. He was positive, however, that he must take some chances, and even in the midst of his danger he recalled the remark of his father, who frequently said, "The man who does not take any chances, takes nothing else."

Both boys now were watching keenly for a place in which to hide. They had not advanced more than two miles before Jesse Tiger suddenly said, "Here is our place."

As he spoke he pointed toward a clump of trees in the distance. There were not enough trees to dignify the spot by the name of woods, and yet there were enough to conceal the machine from the eyes of those who might be passing.

Earl speedily agreed to the suggestion and within a few minutes he turned the car from the roadway and halted in the rear of the clump of trees.

"We'll fix it this way, Jesse," suggested Earl. "One of us will have to stay on guard. The fairest plan will be for us to take turns at it. I'll take my turn and you can sleep. Then after two

or three hours I'll call you and then I'll go to sleep."

Jesse Tiger readily agreed to the suggestion and at once curled up in the rear seat of the automobile and before Earl was fully aware of what he was doing had already fallen asleep.

Several times during the hours that followed, Earl was fearful that their hiding-place had been discovered. He was positive that they had been found, when suddenly a car turned from the road and approached the very place where they were concealed. He softly touched the face of the sleeping young Indian who instantly and silently arose. Without speaking, Earl indicated the sound which he had heard and Jesse also was speedily aware that a car was approaching the place where they were waiting.

"Take your pistol," whispered Earl. "If we're attacked, we'll fight. If they leave us alone, we won't harm them."

To the surprise of the two young Americans, the car was driven to the upper end of the clump of trees and there halted. For some reason, which Earl could not conjecture, another car had sought the same hiding-place. He began to think that

they were unaware of the presence of the first car and that there were other reasons why they had sought this particular locality.

His conjecture was strengthened when, after a lapse of a few minutes, it was evident that whoever the occupants of the second car might be they were preparing to spend at least a part of the night there.

In a brief time their low voices no longer were heard, and a silence tense and tragic rested over the entire region. Neither Earl nor Jesse Tiger cared to sleep now. Both were watchful and alert, striving to be prepared for any sudden onslaught or unexpected attack. The long hours passed slowly, but the silence was unbroken.

At last Jesse Tiger whispered to his comrade, "I have decided to find out if they have a guard over there."

Earl, who was fully aware of the skill of the young Indian in crawling noiselessly over the ground, readily assented to the suggestion, and Jesse Tiger at once disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CAPTURE

SLOWLY and cautiously the young Indian moved forward. He was crawling over the ground and frequently stopped, lifting his head and listening intently for sounds that might interest him as he peered forward into the darkness.

His progress nevertheless was steady, although to Earl, who was waiting for the return of his companion, the time consumed seemed almost endless.

Jesse Tiger at last approached the open space in which the strange automobile had found refuge. His trained eyes were able to see that there were four men in the party, one of whom was sleeping on the ground, while two of his companions were sleeping in the car and a fourth supposedly was on guard.

The Indian's attention was devoted almost en-

tirely to the guard. He watched him keenly until at last he was convinced that the German was not seriously engaged in his task and that at times he even was nodding.

It was only after he had remained for a half-hour on the border of the spot where the party had halted and had thoroughly convinced himself of the location of the men, that at last he decided to return to his impatient friend.

With caution equal to that with which he had advanced, the young Indian silently withdrew from the place. He still was prostrate on the ground, only occasionally raising his head or lifting himself by his hands until he was able to hear definitely any sound that might arise.

At last he regained the position from which he had started and as soon as he discovered his coming, Earl hastily moved toward him and whispered, "Are you hurt?"

"No."

"What made you so long?"

"I wanted to find out."

"What did you find?"

"Four men and an automobile."

"Who are the men?"

"Soldiers."

"What are they doing?"

"Three of them are dead asleep, and the fourth is supposed to be on guard, but is sleeping part of the time."

"They must think they are in no danger."

"That's what they think."

"Shall we try to attack them?" inquired Earl, whose courage instantly revived as he learned from his friend of the disposition which had been made of the band that had stopped near them.

"No," said Jesse Tiger sharply. "You have heard about leaving sleeping dogs alone?"

"Yes."

"Well, it is better to leave sleeping Germans alone than it is to stir them up when we do not know how they are armed. They may have a machine gun in that car. I could not tell."

"Do you think we can get away?"

"I think we can."

"What is your plan?"

"The best thing to do is to wait until it is nearly morning. Just before the light comes is the best time. My grandfather used to tell me that was when the Indians went into battle. They always

took the hour just before dawn for making the surprise attack."

"But we are not making any surprise attack. We're just trying to get away."

"They will sleep if we can get rid of that guard."

"Why didn't you get rid of him when you were there?"

"Because first I wanted to see you. I shall try again, if you agree. I will get the guard and then if I do not wake up the other men we will have less difficulty in passing the place."

"What do you mean when you say you'll 'get' him? Will you kill him?"

"I cannot say. I shall make it so that he cannot stop us or warn his friends that we are coming."

"When will you try?"

"I'll wait until just before the time for us to start. If I go now they may find out what has happened. They will probably change the guard and when they find the man is not there they will suspect that enemies are near."

"We must wait then five or six hours?"

"Yes."

"The whole trouble is I do not know how much gas we have left in the car. It may take us a mile, and it may take us fifty."

"We must try."

"Yes," acknowledged Earl. "We must try. We'll have to take our chances again. We may have to face some pretty hard conditions, but there is one thing that we don't have to face."

"What is that?"

"We don't have to face these hard things until we come to them."

"That's right," said Jesse Tiger. "You shall go to sleep while I stand guard."

"You'll have enough to do," protested Earl, "if you go after that German."

"No, I shall not have too much to do. I shall make my plans and then I shall try it."

Earl did not need much persuading to cause him to accept the suggestion of his comrade. He was wearied by the excitement and the events of the day, which had been of a character to make his every nerve tense. Even his present peril did not serve to arouse new fears. Soon he crawled into the rear seat of the car and in a moment was sleeping soundly.

Jesse Tiger, who never slept when he was on guard, several times crawled toward the camp of his enemy, but did not approach as near as he had on the occasion of his first visit. The most he attempted to discover now was whether or not the party was there and a guard was still maintained.

On each occasion he saw that the man who had been ordered to remain awake to protect his companions was asleep and the sounds which came from the ground and car alike indicated plainly that the companions of this guard were not deeply concerned about their own safety.

The young Indian still continued in his task and not calling Lieutenant Earl, whose turn to serve had long since passed, almost as silent and motionless as the trees about him, waited for the long hours to pass.

If he thought they were moving slowly, there was no action on his part to betray his impatience. It was in this particular that he chiefly differed from the young lieutenant, for whom he had formed such an intense friendship.

At last, however, when Jesse Tiger concluded that three o'clock had arrived he grimly inspected his pistol and once more carefully tested the knife

which he carried in his belt. This knife, he frequently explained to Earl, had been presented to him by his father. It was supposed to be of special temper and capable of receiving a keener edge than could be given to the knives or bayonets with which the soldiers were equipped. In addition to these warlike weapons there was another which not even his friend Earl knew was carried by the Indian. It was a coil of thin, light but very tough ox-hide rope. This had been carried by Jesse Tiger ever since he arrived. Never before had he found any use for it, and he was not at all certain that it would be of any assistance to him on the present occasion. Nevertheless, he looked carefully to the light little lariat and placed it where he could readily grasp it if occasion demanded. Thus equipped, he resumed his former method of approach to the camp of his enemy.

Crawling like a snake, he moved silently over the ground, still occasionally stopping to listen for sounds that might indicate the presence of fresh danger or striving to peer through the dim light for the approach of his enemies. Indeed, on this occasion Jesse Tiger's carefulness was increased. A matter of life and death now was to

be decided and he was determined to do his utmost to make possible his own and his comrade's escape from the dangerous position in which they now found themselves.

At last the Indian gained the border of the open ground. The car still held its occupants, and the form of a man outstretched upon the grass revealed the fact that three were asleep. The fourth man was on guard. Whether it was the same soldier who before had acted in this capacity Jesse could not determine. That matter, however, was immaterial, and he speedily decided to make his final attempt to secure the man.

Already he had noted that the guard was leaning against the trunk of a tree which was at least two and a half feet in diameter. If the guard retained his position for any length of time Jesse Tiger decided it would be possible for him to approach from the rear of the tree and steal upon the man before he was aware of his coming.

After a long wait Jesse Tiger decided that his plan was entirely feasible. Cautiously he encircled the spot, moving slowly and silently from bush to bush and from tree to tree, all the time keenly alert to what was occurring before him.

When he had gained the position he desired he was convinced that the guard still was unsuspicious of the presence of an enemy. He had not moved for several minutes.

Like a snake Jesse Tiger crawled toward the tree. When once he had gained the place he was seeking, he silently arose. In the dim light it almost seemed as if his flashing eyes must be seen. He was keenly excited but even his breathing did not betray any of his suppressed feelings.

Slowly he drew his lariat from the place where it was hanging at his belt, and as soon as he had convinced himself that the noose was adjusted as he desired, he swung the leather rope slowly twice over his head and then cast it.

Before the astonished guard was fully aware of what had befallen him, the noose was drawn tight and any cry the man might have tried to voice was stifled.

Instantly the crouching Indian leaped forward. With the noose still tightly drawn about the neck of the German, who now was prostrate on the ground, the powerful young Indian grasped the fallen man by his shoulders and hastily dragged him from the vicinity. As soon as he had gained

a place of momentary safety he stopped and listened for any sound which might indicate that the companions of the helpless victim had been roused by the noiseless struggle. The silence that rested over the region, however, was unbroken. Not a voice was heard.

Relieved by his discovery, Jesse Tiger loosened the noose on the neck of the man. At the same time he was keeping his own hands in readiness to prevent any outcry on the part of his helpless prisoner.

Jesse Tiger's anxiety, however, was needless. The man was unable to voice any sound save a gurgling which indicated how nearly he had been strangled. Without waiting for further recovery, the Indian dragged the body of his prisoner hastily toward the place where Earl was awaiting his coming.

The astonishment of the young lieutenant may well be imagined when he was aware that his comrade had come back and brought with him a German soldier.

"Is he alive?" he whispered.

"Yes," answered Jesse Tiger shortly. "It is time for us to be gone."

"What shall we do with the prisoner?"

"Throw him into the automobile, and take him with us."

"Do you think we ought to start right away?"

"I do."

Earl waited to hear no more, and at once prepared to attempt what he knew would be a desperate and perhaps fatal effort to escape from the region.

CHAPTER XX

TRAPPED

THE prisoner whom Jesse Tiger secured had not uttered a sound nor had he made any attempt to escape. Apparently he had been so astounded by the method of his capture that he had not yet recovered from his surprise. To be caught with a noose was an entirely new experience for a German soldier. In the increasing light the boys would have laughed under other circumstances at the expression in the German's eyes, as he watched every movement of the young Indian.

There was no time left for surmises, however, and together Earl and Jesse Tiger lifted the prisoner into the rear seat of their automobile, Earl sternly bidding him not to make any attempt to escape and to remain silent, whatever occurred.

As soon as these preparations had been completed, Earl began to back the car out of the wood.

He was doing his utmost to avoid unnecessary noise, but it seemed to him that never before had he heard an automobile so noisy.

His chief reliance was his conviction that the German soldiers were still sleeping soundly in their confidence that they were protected by the guard. What their feelings would be when they should discover that the guard himself had disappeared was a matter to which Earl gave slight heed at the time.

As soon as the car was once more in the road and Earl was convinced that as yet the sleeping Germans had not been aroused by the noise of his automobile, he decided to go ahead at full speed.

Surely there was no opportunity now for belief that the Germans would not be aroused by the sounds of the passing car. To the tense feelings of the young American the sounds seemed to be magnified tenfold. In the dim light of the early morning every stump assumed fantastic shapes. Somehow he was expecting that he would be hailed by some party in front of him or that the reports of guns aimed at the fleeing party would intercept them.

In his nervous state he no longer made any ef-

fort to drive cautiously. Still unaware how much gasoline he had and uncertain as to the distance the car could go, he decided to venture all upon his one last desperate effort to flee from the region.

The little party had not gone far beyond the woods in which their enemies were hiding when suddenly Jesse Tiger called the attention of his companion to the events which were occurring behind them.

Earl gave one swift glance to the rear and saw the three men rush out from amongst the trees. They stood in the road shouting, calling and waving their arms, but as yet not a shot had been fired.

"They will follow us as sure as you're born. We ought to have cut a tube, Jesse," declared the young lieutenant, in a tense voice. "Everything now will depend upon whether their car is as fast as ours."

"They will have to go some," remarked Jesse Tiger solemnly.

His words apparently were confirmed by the speed with which Earl was driving his car. The trees and fields almost seemed to be darting behind them. The light steadily was increasing in

volume and no longer was it possible for him to rely upon the protection of the night.

"There they come! They're coming!" exclaimed Jesse suddenly.

Earl glanced hastily behind him and saw that the young Indian's words were indeed true. The automobile of his enemies had already been drawn out into the road. There was evidently great haste on the part of all three men, and a moment later the car could be seen dashing down the road in swift pursuit.

"I'll give her a little more gas whether I have any left after that or not," muttered Earl, as the automobile seemed to leap forward.

A mad race followed. For a time it was not apparent which car was gaining, as the distance between the two seemed to remain unchanged.

In a brief time, however, Earl declared triumphantly, "We're leaving them. They're dropping behind every minute. If only our gas will hold out, our German friends will soon forget how we look."

"Germans are not my friends," declared Jesse Tiger solemnly.

"So I understand," replied Earl, with a smile.

The young soldier's heart was lighter now that he was convinced, if his supply only held out, that he could soon outdistance the party in pursuit.

Ten minutes later, after such a ride as neither of the boys ever before had taken, the pursuing car no longer was within sight.

Even then, however, Earl did not decrease his speed. Fearful as he was of what might be before them, he was also afraid of his pursuers. In the event of an accident or his supply of gas giving out, he was fearful that the Germans would be upon him before he and his friend would be able to escape.

When at last he was strengthened in his conviction that the pursuing car had abandoned the chase or had been left so far behind that it was no longer to be feared, Earl decreased the speed at which he was running.

Fifteen minutes later he again lessened the speed of his car, for he was eager to avoid arousing the suspicions of any parties whom he might approach or pass.

Indeed, he was not yet positive that he had escaped from the men behind him. Doubtless they were puzzled about the disappearance of their

guard. It might be too that they suspected him of having played them false and in that event they would maintain their pursuit until they obtained some evidence that would convince them.

As he glanced ahead of him, Earl saw a small clump of woods on his left. He was of course ignorant of the fact that amongst those trees his brother Leon had passed the preceding night with the German colonel, whom he had made his prisoner. If only the young lieutenant had known of conditions, he might have escaped some of the troubles which speedily came upon him.

As it was, however, in his ignorance and determination, he drove swiftly down the road, unmindful of the call of his brother and unaware that he had been hailed by Leon himself.

The car was moving now only about eighteen miles an hour. There were added reasons for precaution, and in spite of his feeling of hunger Earl was determined not to halt until he was compelled to do so.

Moving steadily over the road in the light which even yet was not clear, he was not aware of a fresh peril which speedily confronted him.

In the middle of the road a great shell-hole had

been torn. The space was at least twenty-five feet in diameter and the earth had been torn away to a depth in places of twelve to fifteen feet, although on the side toward which the car was approaching there was a more gradual descent into the pit.

Abruptly Jesse Tiger touched the arm of the driver as he said, "Look out! Look out!"

Startled as he was by the unexpected warning, Earl's arm moved in a direction opposite to that which he desired and instead of turning out, the automobile rushed forward into the shell-hole itself. Earl had contrived to shut off all speed, otherwise a part of this story would be concluded at this stage.

The car darted down the sloping side directly into the shell-hole. The soft earth retarded but did not entirely stop its progress. Both boys were thrown against the windshield when at last the rocking automobile came to a standstill within the shell-hole.

Fortunately both had escaped serious injury, although Earl, as he afterward described his sensations, felt that "everything he possessed had been shaken out of him, even to his ideas."

The coming of the car produced an unexpected result. As the automobile bounded forward there was a wild cry of agony. Both young soldiers were so completely astounded by the sound that their own nerves were severely shaken.

It was not until they had leaped out of the car that they became aware that the automobile had struck the body of a horse. The back of the animal had been broken by the blow and from the horse had come the almost human cries of anguish.

"It's too bad," exclaimed Jesse Tiger, as soon as he discovered the cause of the wild cries. "I must put the poor brute out of his agony." Drawing his long, keen knife, the Indian drove it into the heart of the struggling animal and almost instantly silence again rested over the spot.

"Look there!" exclaimed Earl in a low voice, as he pointed to one side of the shell-hole. Lying upon the ground was the body of a man. A hasty inspection revealed the fact that he was still living, although his eyes were closed and his face was covered with blood. Some of this had dried and been discolored by the dust of the road. It would have been difficult even for the mother of the

fallen soldier to have recognized in the blood-stained and begrimed figure the body of any one she knew.

There was no opportunity for removing the filth, but both young Americans instantly devoted themselves to the task of trying to aid the man who plainly had been severely wounded. He was clad in the uniform of the French Aviation Corps, and both Earl and Jesse Tiger tried to recognize some one they knew.

Their efforts were unavailing, however, and their task had not been completed when they were startled by a sudden call which came directly from above them.

Peering down over the border of the shell-hole, Earl saw the face of his own brother, Leon, who still was holding his German prisoner by his side, compelling the colonel to lean forward and also to peer with him down into the midst of the excavation.

For a moment Leon stared blankly at the startling vision and then in a low voice said, "Is that really you, Earl?"

"It surely is."

"What has happened?"

"We had an accident. I didn't see this big shell-hole and drove straight into it."

"And I helped him," added Jesse Tiger, in a low voice. "I grabbed his arm."

Ignoring the interruption, Leon said quickly, "Where did this horse come from?" pointing as he spoke to the body of the animal which plainly had just breathed its last.

"I haven't the remotest idea," answered Earl. "It must be that he, too, didn't see the hole and fell into it. I think somebody must have been riding him at the time, for there's the body of one of our own boys that we found here. I don't see what he was doing so far from our lines, but here he is and he's in bad shape."

Without a word, Leon leaped to the side of the prostrate soldier. Kneeling beside the body, he brushed back the hair from the forehead and gazed closely into the discolored and bloody face. "It's Jacques," he explained. "I found him last night. He had been badly wounded. I put him on the back of my horse, but I found I had to sit behind him to hold him up. We made the German colonel march before us," he continued, as he nodded at his prisoner, whom he had compelled to

enter with him into the shell-hole. "I left Jacques with the horse a few minutes, but when we came back he and the horse both were gone. I think something must have frightened the horse and he made a break for it. Somehow Jacques must have managed to stay on his back, and without any question the horse stumbled into this place."

"I think he broke his leg," said Earl, "and probably threw Jacques so hard that he was stunned. Very likely his fall, on top of the wounds he received, made him look the way he does. He's still alive, though, and it may be we can get him out of this. Do you think we can pull this car up?"

"We can try," said Leon quickly, as he bade his prisoner grasp the spokes of one of the front wheels, while he himself took hold of the other wheel in front. At the same time Jesse Tiger and Earl took their places at the rear wheels.

The united effort, however, failed to do more than slightly move the car in the soft earth. Again and again the party did their utmost to bring the car up, but even their united strength was not equal to the task. The prisoner plainly was doing his utmost to assist, for his uneasiness

was manifest at their continued presence in the shell-hole. The cause of this was not clear to the boys, but they were too intent upon their own immediate problem to watch the man.

At last, convinced that their efforts were futile, Earl said, "I'm afraid there's another car coming down the road that will give us trouble." In a few words he related to his brother the events of the preceding night.

"If that is all true," declared Leon quickly, as his brother ceased, "the only thing for us to do is to get out, and the sooner we do so the better it will be for every one."

"But you cannot get out," declared Jesse Tiger, who while the brothers were conversing had clambered up one side of the excavation until he was able to see all about him. Plainly he had discovered something which alarmed him, for his keen excitement was evident to Leon and Earl when he resumed his place and made the remark which had startled them.

CHAPTER XXI

IN THE MIDST OF THE DIN

"WHAT do you mean?" demanded Leon, keenly aroused by the statement of the young Indian.

"Because there is firing all around us."

For a moment Leon stopped, and both he and his brother listened intently. They had been so greatly excited by the events which had occurred in the shell-hole, where they had found refuge, that they were not fully aware of the increase in the noise of the great guns. Steadily the bombing had become louder, and now, when for a moment the two young lieutenants, warned by their companion, became silent, they were aware of the fact that a great battle was surging toward them. Indeed, they might even now be in the very center of it and caught between the lines.

At the bidding of Jesse Tiger, both Leon and Earl rushed to the side of the shell-hole, from the

top of which the Indian had been observing the country round about them. The boys saw great clouds of smoke, near by, and the booming of the guns which had seemed so loud a brief time before now seemed to increase in volume until it was impossible for them to distinguish from which side the louder reports were coming.

At that moment a shell dropped dangerously near the border of their refuge, and instantly all three young soldiers leaped back for safety.

The crash was followed by another and still another, until at last in the momentary silence that came Leon said, "Somebody must have our range."

"That's so," said Jesse Tiger.

"Then the thing for us to do," exclaimed Leon, "is to get out of this place. The sooner we start, the better it will be for every one."

"But we cannot start," remarked the young Indian quietly. "We shall run into the firing if we try it."

"But we might as well run into it as for them to catch us here like a lot of rats in a trap."

"There's less danger if we stay right here where we are, because no one will see us."

"From the actions of those guns it looks as if somebody had already found us out and knew that we were hiding here," declared Leon, as another great shell burst not far away and scattered its shrapnel in every direction.

"I agree with Jesse Tiger," declared Earl quietly. "The thing for us to do is to stay here. Besides, we cannot leave Jacques, Leon."

"Poor Jacques!" exclaimed Leon. "I had almost forgotten the fellow. He doesn't look just now as if it would make much difference to him whether we try to get him away or leave him here."

"It will make a great difference to us, though," said Earl positively. "You would never be able to look yourself in the face if you ran and left your friend here." Earl was so strongly convinced that Jesse Tiger was correct in his advice that they should remain for a time at least where they then were, that he was willing to attempt almost any plan in order to prevent his more impulsive brother from throwing himself into the midst of the dangers which they certainly would meet if they attempted to flee from the spot.

Meanwhile the noise of the battle increased.

The very heavens seemed to be rent asunder by the terrific reports. Clouds of smoke rolled away in the distance, but as yet the boys had not been able to discover the immediate presence of any of their enemies or friends.

"It's safer down in the shell-hole," declared Earl, as he slid from the place he was occupying to the softer ground below. His example was speedily followed by his brother, but Jesse Tiger still remained on the border, either fascinated by the sight upon which he was gazing or watching for some opportunity to depart from the spot.

For a half-hour the din continued. The noise, which had been greater than either of the young lieutenants had ever experienced, became even worse. For a moment it seemed as if their very ear drums must split. And the great crashes continued. Not a respite of a moment apparently was given the men who were firing the big guns. That there would be a desperate attack by the infantry a little later was uppermost in the thoughts of both boys, the supreme question being which side would advance and which would attempt the counterattack that also was certain to come.

Several more shells struck close to the shell-hole, one falling on the very border and greatly increasing the size of the excavation, at the same time showering those who had sought refuge there with dust and gravel.

"A close call, that," murmured Leon, as he arose and somewhat ruefully shook the dust and dirt from his clothing.

"As long as it doesn't hit us, it's far enough away to keep us safe."

"I'm afraid your mother wouldn't agree with you," declared Leon sharply. "If she could see us now she might not think that we were half as safe as you seem inclined to believe."

"It's all relative," declared Earl, whose mind was much more matter-of-fact than his brother's.

He was unable to understand how any one in such a plight as they found themselves could speak lightly of their peril, or in any way belittle the knowledge of the danger which threatened them.

Suddenly there was a terrific explosion. There was the sound of crashing trees, and all three boys were alarmed as well as startled when a moment later a huge trunk of a tree came rolling over the edge of the shell-hole and plunged down the side

until it rested above the body of Jacques, who was lying prostrate on the ground.

"It's killed him! It's killed him!" shouted Leon. "Come on, boys, we must help him out."

The trunk, however, was too heavy for the young soldiers to lift. Careful inspection revealed the fact that although it had fallen across the body of the wounded young Frenchman, it was not crushing him. Jacques was lying in a slight hollow, and over this the huge tree had fallen. He was pinned and held in his present position, but as he was unable to move anyway, the tree served only to intensify the helplessness of the young Frenchman.

The plight of the desperate young soldiers now became more terrifying. The roar of the battle still appeared to increase in volume. The presence of their wounded friend rendered the thought of flight almost impossible, and the dead body of the horse upon which Leon had ridden added to the horror of it all.

The German colonel had seated himself in abject despair and apparently had become indifferent to his fate. The prisoner whom Earl and Jesse Tiger had brought was in not much better

condition. His face was ghastly, and his abject terror was manifest in his shaking hand and trembling form.

"I'd give my right arm if I could only have some water here for Jacques," spoke up Leon, in a momentary lull.

"You haven't any water and you had better keep your arm, you may need it," remarked Earl, somewhat tartly. "The fact is, not one of us has any water or food, and no one knows how long we may be kept in this inferno."

"It will be over in half an hour," suggested Leon, striving to speak hopefully.

"If I thought it would be over in two days I should be happy," declared Earl dolefully. "There's nothing for us to do except to stay here until our men come along or the Germans drive our fellows back and find us waiting for them."

"That's a cheerful picture you're drawing," suggested Leon. "For myself I don't care much whether I have one or the other if what you say is going to be true."

"I don't think it will make any difference whether we like it or not," declared Earl. "We're in here, and there's no way of getting out

that I can see, and the longer we stay here the greater becomes our danger. We're liable to be hit by one of the shells or caught in a barrage fire by one army or the other, and if that doesn't work out then we have a chance of being shot by our own fellows before they find out just who we are."

"There's nothing in that," declared Leon. "If we get hit by a shell it will be because we can't help ourselves, and there's no use in worrying about that part. I confess I'm more afraid of some tree being torn up or thrown on us by one of those guns. It would take a team of oxen to move that tree which has fallen across Jacques here," he said, as he glanced once more at the place where his wounded friend was lying.

"I don't see why you're such a fatalist about shrapnel and so afraid of the tree trunks," said Earl.

"That's because you're lacking in imagination," declared his brother. This was Leon's frequent retort when his twin brother failed to appreciate his jokes or received some of his remarks in his own matter-of-fact way.

At all events, whatever the opinion of the boys may have been, the hours passed slowly and there

still was no relief in sight. It was evident that there was a desperate struggle going on and that the opposing armies were locked in a contest that must mean the breaking of one line or the other.

The sun sank lower in the western sky and the twinkling stars appeared overhead, and yet the din and confusion did not decrease for a moment.

What quantities of shells must have been thrown, Leon thought. And the guns, they must be almost numberless to keep up such a continuous firing. In his mind he thought of the line from which doubtless many of his friends already had fallen.

The picture was not inspiring, and the young lieutenant was aroused from his reverie by the voice of his brother, who was saying, "We haven't had a drop of water to drink or a mouthful of food to eat in nearly forty hours."

"That's longer than I have gone," declared Leon. "I wish I could do something to help you out, old man, but I don't see what we can do except to stay right where we are, as you say, and wait for something to come our way."

"The something to come our way is more likely

to be a shell or a trunk of a tree than anything else," declared Earl gloomily.

"Then if it comes we'll have to stand up and take our medicine like men," said Leon, striving to speak as cheerfully as possible. "We don't have to take it until it does come, though, don't forget that."

The night at last was gone, and once more the dawn was appearing. The suffering of the boys from thirst was more intense. In a measure they had forgotten their hunger, but their mouths were dry and parched and still there was no prospect of relief or release. Once a shell had fallen into the pit, but fortunately it had not exploded.

Still the hours dragged on. The day itself at last wore away and night once more appeared. There were no stars in the heavens, however, now, and the thick darkness provided a background against which the lights and flashes from the great guns were more distinctly perceived.

The suffering of the boys was becoming almost unbearable. Help of some kind must be had or not one of them would be left alive. Again and again they had almost resolved to flee from the spot, but the thought of Jacques who still was

living, although he was unconscious, held them back.

In their desperation at last Jesse Tiger drew the two young lieutenants to one side and in a low voice explained a project which he thought might bring them help.

CHAPTER XXII

CONCLUSION

"I MUST go for help," said the young Indian simply.

"But you cannot get through," protested Leon. "The enemy is all around us."

"I must go for help," repeated Jesse Tiger.

For a moment the two young officers looked blankly at the daring young soldier, who in his quiet manner and his thorough self-possession impressed them as never before. They both were familiar with his ability as a scout, and more than once stories had been told them of how he had wriggled his way across lands where it did not seem possible a human being could live. Their own plight was desperate. Shells were falling near them, and there were moments when both boys were well-nigh convinced that the Germans must be aware that a little band of their enemy was hidden within the shell-hole.

After a brief hesitation, Earl said to the young Indian, "What is your plan?"

"To go through to the American lines."

"But what will you do if you are taken?"

Jesse Tiger shrugged his shoulders and did not reply.

"Let him go," said Leon. "It cannot be much worse for him out there than it is here. We don't know any minute what may happen to every one of us. He'll be facing the same things outside, and if he *should* be able to get through to our lines, he might get help for us."

"I'm afraid he will not get very much help, even if he should get through," said Earl disconsolately. "What chance will our boys have, even if they know we are here, to break through those lines? It's a pity we ever started out on this fool business."

"But the bridge is blown up," said Leon, and then as he glanced behind him to see once more that their two prisoners were safe, he added, "and we have something else to show for our work."

"They are in the same boat with us," acknowledged Earl, as he too glanced at the prisoners.

The one whom he and Jesse Tiger had caught

was lying on the ground, crouched closely against the side of the excavation. The German colonel was seated on the ground, his elbows resting upon his knees and his face clasped in his hands. He was the picture of abject despair, and under other circumstances the young American officers might have laughed at his hopeless attitude.

"Look yonder!" exclaimed Earl suddenly, as he pointed to a band of men rapidly approaching on his left.

The boys became silent as they watched the men who evidently were doing their utmost to depart from the region. It soon was manifest that they were German troops, and it was equally plain that they were fleeing.

"If they should find us," suggested Earl, "they might stop long enough to put us out of business."

"I don't know," retorted Leon, "whether they would or not. They seem to have very important business just now and every one of them is working as if he was afraid he would lose his job."

"I'm going back to our lines," repeated Jesse Tiger.

Neither of the boys now protested, and the young Indian speedily crawled over the edge of

the shell-hole. Crouching low, he ran swiftly for the shelter of some low trees not far away. The boys watched him until they were convinced that he had safely gained the refuge he sought, and then they saw him no more.

"There are men over yonder, too," said Earl, who was the first to speak after the departure of their friend. He was pointing toward another body of troops, also plainly Germans, who were moving rapidly to the rear not more than five hundred yards distant from the hiding place of the young Americans.

It was indeed apparent that the German troops were "moving to the rear" and yet just what this might imply neither of the boys clearly understood. Was the Hindenburg Line broken? Were the Americans following up the fleeing Germans? It was impossible to determine, inasmuch as the boys were able to see only a small part of the line.

It was plain, however, that the Germans were withdrawing. Perhaps they were carrying out another of their famous "strategic retreats."

The noise of the battle did not decrease. The roar was such that the very ear drums of the listeners threatened almost to be broken.

Men who had fallen were to be seen on every side. Again and again a great shell fell close to the place where the boys were hiding, but as yet the only damage that had been wrought was the falling of the tree trunk which had rested across the prostrate body of Jacques.

The thought caused Leon at once to turn to his friend. He found the young Frenchman still unconscious and manifestly weaker. It was plain too that he was suffering from fever. Assured that he was unable to afford any relief, Leon hastily returned to the side of his brother and resumed his watching.

Once he turned to look at the automobile which had fallen into the shell-hole. There were wild thoughts in his heart of trying to drag the car once more to the upper earth and attempting to escape from the region by wild flight. The suggestion, however, was too wild to be considered long, and consequently was abandoned.

Leon glanced again at his brother. The lieutenant who had prided himself upon his spotless appearance did not now much resemble the dashing young officer who had led his men in former charges or marched with them in dress parade.

His uniform was discolored and his face so covered with dirt that it is doubtful if his own mother would have recognized him under the circumstances.

Again he looked for traces of Jesse Tiger, but the young Indian long since had disappeared from sight.

If the boys had been able to follow their friend they would have seen him as he crawled from thicket to thicket or from tree to tree, and then in the open spaces, prostrate upon the ground, worm his way forward. Both knew that Jesse Tiger was as unfamiliar with the region as they. In a general way he was aware that he must move in one direction if he was to regain his place among his countrymen, and that was all.

Steadily and persistently the young Indian pushed forward, frequently compelled to remain motionless, and several times to pass as one who had fallen in the fight. Nevertheless, at every opportunity he advanced. Sometimes he ran swiftly and at others barely walked, and then again was motionless or crawling over the ground.

It became more and more evident to the young Indian that the Germans were ready to break

loose. He could see in many places that already they were giving way before the onslaught of the Americans and French in front of them. Again and again Jesse Tiger wondered why it was that he had not been hit by a bullet or wounded by the shrapnel. At one time he crept under the fallen wall of what once had been a house. Again he sought shelter at the side of a barn, all of which that remained was a lone wall.

At last there came a time in his efforts when to his amazement he was rushed by a party of troops whom he recognized as his own former companions. Twice he called loudly and then shouted, but no one recognized him. Indeed, as he became aware of this fact, he once more cast himself upon the ground and did not attempt to rise when the men swept past him.

The effect, however, upon Jesse Tiger of the sight of his own soldiers made him almost like a wild man. For a moment he was tempted to disregard all precautions and to hail again the men clad in the familiar uniform of the American army.

At last, however, he saw Captain Bolney. The sight was more than the young Indian was able to

resist. Disregarding all thoughts of his peril, he arose and ran swiftly toward the officer.

His delight was great when he found that he had been recognized. The captain, when he caught sight of the running wild man, had prepared to shoot, but something in the appearance of the soldier had restrained him, and a moment later the young Indian was talking to him.

"The boys have two prisoners. They are hiding in a shell-hole and are surrounded by Germans. If they do not have help soon they will be killed, every one."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Lieutenant Pratt and Lieutenant Pratt."

"Where are they?" instantly demanded the captain.

"About two miles over yonder," answered Jesse Tiger, as he pointed in the direction from which he had come.

"Can we get to them?"

"We must."

"Will you lead the way?"

"Yes! Yes!" answered the Indian.

"I will see what can be done," said the captain

quickly. "You stay right here where you are and I will soon be back."

In a brief time Captain Bolney returned. With him were thirty men taken from the companies which Leon and Earl had led.

"These men will follow you wherever you take them," explained the captain. "If you can get the boys out of their trouble we shall be glad, but you are taking a great risk. I called for volunteers, and every man responded. These thirty will go with you and Lieutenant Egan will be in command. Are you ready to start now?"

"Yes," said Jesse Tiger simply.

He did not feel called upon to explain that he had had no food for two days and that water had not passed his lips for many hours. His eagerness to rescue his friends, however, was so great that other things were ignored, and the little party, fully armed, at once set forth in the direction indicated by the scout.

It was plain now that at least in this region the boasted Hindenburg Line had been broken. Carefully prepared trenches were passed, and even in the midst of the excitement many of the boys mar-

veled at the care and thoroughness with which the famous line had been formed.

The main part of the battle now had passed to the east. In the immediate vicinity covered by the advancing troops many bodies of the dead were seen strewn upon the ground, and here and there wounded men piteously begged for help.

The eagerness of the Indian scout, however, caused most of the assigned volunteers to follow him. Caution now was cast aside. Upright and running so swiftly that the men behind followed with difficulty, Jesse Tiger continued on his way.

At last, however, the band arrived at the place they were seeking. It was the work of only a few moments to rescue the young lieutenants and to send the prisoners to the rear. When the latter started, the German colonel gave one appealing look at Leon, as if he were begging him for mercy. It was evident from his action that he believed he was going to certain death. Doubtless many of the stories which had been told the German soldiers concerning the cruelty of the Americans and the brutal manner in which they treated their prisoners of war had been believed by him. It was not until several days afterward that Leon was able

to find the man whom he had taken, and the change in the attitude of the colonel was marked. His face was glowing, and it was plain that he was enjoying his experience among the Americans whom he had so much feared.

As soon as food and drink had been obtained, the young lieutenants insisted upon taking their places once more with their own troops. There was an exhilaration now in the struggle, and the fact that they were driving the enemy before them and compelling them to give up the lines, which they had supposed to be impenetrable, provided a fresh incentive.

Steadily forward the Americans pushed their way until at last Leon was startled when he recognized the fallen bridge. It was the very one which he had dynamited. There was no opportunity, however, to stop for investigations. It was plain that the destruction of the bridge had prevented the Germans from sending out forces and supplies by this road and that also in their retreat they had been compelled to use other means of crossing the stream.

As Lieutenant Leon with his troops advanced up the road they came to a little house which the

young lieutenant instantly recognized. It was there that he and Jacques had found refuge. It was there, too, that his unknown girl friend had provided a unique means by which he recrossed the stream. He looked all about the place, but not a glimpse of any one did he obtain. Doubtless she had fled with the old women when the battle had rolled near.

The fight had been won, although it was not until afterward that Leon and Earl understood the full significance of the victory they had obtained. Then early one day there came the rumor that at eleven o'clock in the morning the fighting was to cease because an armistice had been signed. At first incredulous, the soldiers soon were listening intently, and then were wild in their enthusiasm.

The fighting, however, continued until the appointed hour had arrived and then as abruptly as if Marshal Foch himself had been present to give the order, the firing ceased. There were wild cheers among the Americans and answering shouts from the opposite German lines. The armistice had been signed! Details were lacking, but it was enough to know that the Germans had sought an end of hostilities. Peace would soon

be at hand. The war was ended and through all the terrible experiences which had been theirs, both Leon and Earl had come safely. Their friend Jacques, however, who had been rescued from his perilous position by friendly hands, never entirely regained his strength. One leg had been broken, though whether it was the result of the fall of the tree or of a previous experience he never explained. Nor did he ever tell Leon why he had made his wild flight and escaped from the place where his friend had left him. Perhaps he did not know.

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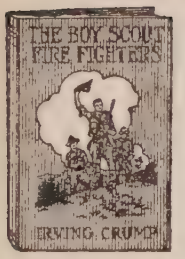

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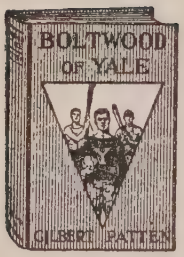

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